

God's Kingdom Rules!



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WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT
SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
God's Kingdom Rules!

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God's Kingdom Rules!

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A LETTER FROM THE GOVERNING BODY

Dear Fellow Kingdom Publisher:

PICTURE yourself as a member of the Brooklyn Bethel family on Friday morning, October 2, 1914. You are seated at your usual place at the breakfast table, awaiting the arrival of Brother C. T. Russell. Suddenly the door to the dining room opens and Brother Russell appears. He pauses for a moment, as is his custom, and greets the Bethel family with a cheery “Good morning, all.” But then, instead of immediately taking his place at the head of the table, he claps his hands and makes a thrilling announcement: “The Gentile Times have ended; their kings have had their day!” You can hardly contain your joy—you have been looking forward to this moment for a long time! Along with the rest of the Bethel family, you greet this exciting news with sustained, enthusiastic applause.



Many decades have passed since Brother Russell made that electrifying statement. What has the Kingdom accomplished since then? A great deal! Through the Kingdom arrangement, Jehovah has been progressively refining and training his people—from just a few thousand in 1914 to more than seven-and-a-half million today. How many ways have you personally benefited from such training?

Today we often hear our brothers say, “Jehovah’s celestial chariot is on the move!” and that is true. However, the fact is that since 1914, the celestial chariot, depicting the invisible part of Jehovah’s organization, has *always* been on the move, as a careful reading of this publication will demonstrate. With a view to getting the good news preached worldwide, Kingdom publishers have used a variety of innovative methods, including newspapers, information marches, picture presentations, testimony cards, phonographs, radio, and even the Internet.

With Jehovah’s blessing on the work, we are now able to publish our attractive Bible literature in more than 670 languages and to offer it to everyone without charge. Self-sacrificing volunteers assist in the construction of Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and branch facilities, both in prosperous lands and in lands with limited resources. And when disaster strikes, loving brothers and sisters rush to the aid of those in the affected areas, proving that they truly are “born for times of distress.”—Prov. 17:17.

At times, the clergy and other opposers frame “trouble in the name of the law,” but it is faith-strengthening to see how, time and again, their misguided efforts have turned out to be “for the advancement of the good news.”—Ps. 94:20; Phil. 1:12.

It is an honor for us to be associated with you, our fellow “domestics.” Please know that we love all of you very much. It is our prayer that the contents of this publication will help you to appreciate your spiritual heritage as never before.—Matt. 24:45.

With every good wish, we are

Your brothers,

Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses

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1

“Let Your Kingdom Come”

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Examine what Jesus taught about God’s Kingdom

1, 2. What words did Jehovah himself speak in the hearing of three of Jesus’ apostles, and how did they respond?

3. Why does Jehovah want us to listen to his Son, and what subject do we thus do well to examine?

4. How did Jesus indicate that the Kingdom is close to his heart?

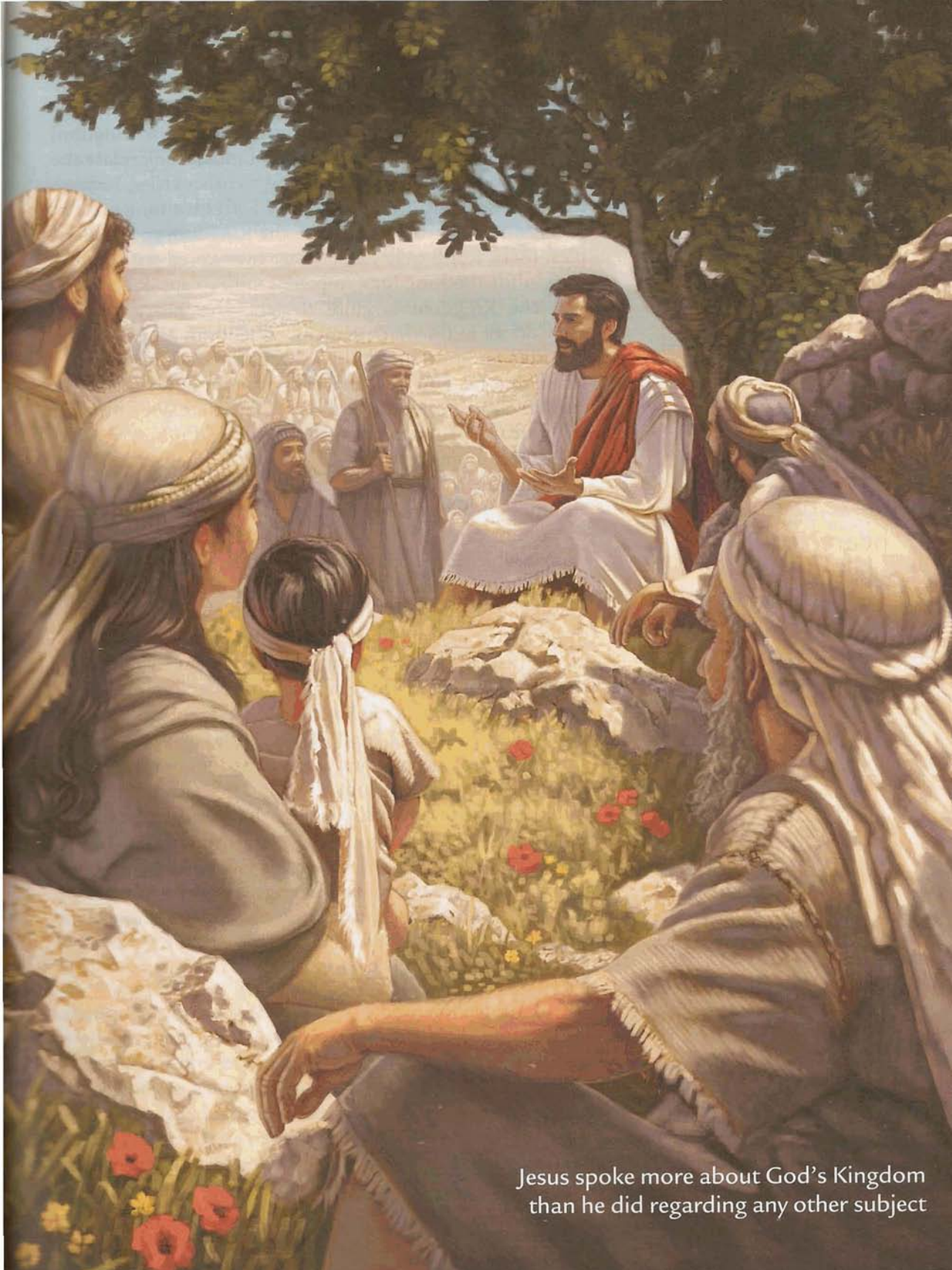
IF Jehovah God himself directed you to do something, how would you respond? No matter what he asked, would you not be eager to heed his direction? Surely you would!

² Sometime after the Passover of 32 C.E., three of Jesus’ apostles—Peter, James, and John—had just such an experience. (**Read Matthew 17:1-5.**) Gathered with their Master on “a lofty mountain,” they saw in vision a preview of Jesus as a glorious heavenly King. The vision seemed so real that Peter tried to take part in it. While Peter was speaking, a cloud formed over them. Then Peter and his associates plainly heard what only a handful of humans have ever been privileged to hear—Jehovah’s own voice. After affirming that Jesus was his Son, Jehovah said pointedly: “Listen to him.” The apostles heeded that divine direction. They listened to what Jesus taught, and they urged others to do the same.—Acts 3:19-23; 4:18-20.

³ Those words—“Listen to him”—were recorded in the Bible for our benefit. (Rom. 15:4) Why? Because Jesus is Jehovah’s spokesman and every time Jesus opened his mouth to teach, he shared what his Father wanted us to know. (John 1:1, 14) Since Jesus spoke more about God’s Kingdom, the heavenly Messianic government made up of Christ Jesus and his 144,000 corulers, than he did about any other subject, we do well to examine this vital subject carefully. (Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:1-3; 20:6) First, though, let us examine why Jesus said so much about God’s Kingdom.

“Out of the Abundance of the Heart . . .”

⁴ The Kingdom is close to Jesus’ heart. Why can we say that? Because words are a window into the heart—that is, our words reveal what is truly important to us. Jesus himself said: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matt. 12:34) At every opportunity, Jesus opened



Jesus spoke more about God's Kingdom
than he did regarding any other subject

5-7. (a) How do we know that the Kingdom is close to Jehovah's heart? Illustrate. (b) How can we show that the Kingdom is close to our heart?

8. How did Jesus sum up the importance of the Kingdom?

Each of us does well to ask, 'Is God's Kingdom close to my heart?'

his mouth to speak about the Kingdom. There are over 100 references to the Kingdom in the four Gospels, most of them in statements made by Jesus. He made the Kingdom the theme of his preaching, saying: "I must also declare the good news of the Kingdom of God to other cities, because for this I was sent." (Luke 4:43) Even after his resurrection, Jesus continued to speak about the Kingdom to his disciples. (Acts 1:3) Surely Jesus' heart overflowed with appreciation for the Kingdom, impelling him to speak about it.

⁵ The Kingdom is close to Jehovah's heart as well. How do we know that? Remember, Jehovah sent his only-begotten Son into the world; Jehovah is the source of everything that his Son said and taught. (John 7:16; 12:49, 50) Jehovah is also the source of everything that is recorded in the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. Consider for a moment what that means.

⁶ Imagine that you are putting together a family photo album. You have many photographs to choose from, but the album can hold only so many. What do you do? You choose which ones to include. In a sense, the Gospels are like a photo album that gives us a clear picture of Jesus. Jehovah did not inspire the Gospel writers to record everything that Jesus said and did while on earth. (John 20:30; 21:25) Instead, Jehovah's spirit guided them in recording the words and deeds that help us to understand the purpose of Jesus' ministry and what is most important to Jehovah. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:21) Since the Gospels are filled with Jesus' teachings about God's Kingdom, we may safely conclude that the Kingdom is close to Jehovah's heart. Just think—Jehovah wants us to know what his Kingdom is all about!

⁷ Each of us does well to ask, 'Is God's Kingdom close to my heart?' If it is, we will be eager to listen to what Jesus said and taught about that Kingdom—its importance and how and when it will come.

"Let Your Kingdom Come"—How?

⁸ Consider the model prayer. With eloquent simplicity, Jesus summed up the importance of the Kingdom, showing what it will accomplish. That prayer consists of seven petitions. The first three concern Jehovah's purposes—the sanctification of his name, the coming of his Kingdom, and the carrying out of his will on earth as in heaven. (**Read Matthew 6:9, 10.**) Those three petitions are closely related.

The Messianic Kingdom is the instrument through which Jehovah will sanctify his name and carry out his will.

9 How will God's Kingdom come? When we pray, "Let your Kingdom come," we are asking that the Kingdom take decisive action. When the Kingdom comes, it will exert its full power toward the earth. It will remove the present wicked system of things, including all man-made governments, and bring in a righteous new world. (Dan. 2:44; 2 Pet. 3:13) Then, under Kingdom rule, the entire earth will become a paradise. (Luke 23:43) Those in God's memory will be brought back to life and reunited with their loved ones. (John 5:28, 29) Obedient humans will reach perfection and enjoy endless life. (Rev. 21:3-5) At last, earth will be in perfect harmony with heaven, reflecting the will of Jehovah God! Do you not long to see those Bible promises come true? Remember that every time you pray for God's Kingdom to come, you are praying for those precious promises to be fulfilled.

10 It is clear that God's Kingdom has not yet "come" to fulfill the model prayer. After all, man-made governments are still ruling and the righteous new world is not yet here. But there is good news. God's Kingdom has been established, as we will discuss in the next chapter. Let us now examine what Jesus said as to when the Kingdom would be established and when it would come.

When Would God's Kingdom Be Established?

11 Jesus indicated that the Kingdom would not be established in the first century C.E., despite the expectations of some of his disciples. (Acts 1:6) Consider what he said in two different parables given less than two years apart.

12 The parable of the wheat and the weeds. (Read Matthew 13:24-30.) After relating this parable, perhaps in the spring of 31 C.E., Jesus explained it to his disciples. (Matt. 13:36-43) Here is the gist of the parable and its meaning: Following the death of the apostles, the Devil would sow weeds (imitation Christians) in among wheat ("sons of the Kingdom," or anointed Christians). Both the wheat and the weeds would be allowed to grow together during a growing season that would continue until the harvest, which is "a conclusion of a system of things." After the beginning of the harvest season, the weeds would be collected. Then, the wheat would be gathered. The parable thus indicates that the Kingdom would be established, not in the first century C.E., but only after the growing season

9, 10. (a) How will God's Kingdom come? (b) What Bible promise do you long to see fulfilled?

11. What did Jesus indicate about the establishment of God's Kingdom?

12. How does the parable of the wheat and the weeds indicate that the Kingdom was not established in the first century C.E.?

THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

(Matt. 13:24-30)

Jesus indicated that the Kingdom would not be established in the first century C.E., despite the expectations of some of his disciples

33 C.E.

Sowing Begins

'A man sowed fine seed in his field'
(Matt. 13:24)

'While men were sleeping, the enemy oversowed weeds'
(Matt. 13:25)

"Both grow together until the harvest"
(Matt. 13:30)

1914

Harvest Season Begins

The weeds are collected and bundled
(Matt. 13:30)

13. How did Jesus illustrate that he would not be installed as Messianic King immediately after his return to heaven?

14. (a) How did Jesus answer the question that four of his apostles asked him?
(b) What does the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy tell us about his presence and the Kingdom?

FOOTNOTE

[1] Jesus' parable may well have reminded his listeners of Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great. Before Herod died, he designated Archelaus as heir to rulership over Judea and other areas. However, before he could begin ruling, Archelaus first had to make the long journey to Rome in order to secure the approval of Augustus Caesar.

ended. As matters worked out, the growing season ended and the harvest season began in 1914.

13 The parable of the minas. (Read Luke 19:11-13.) Jesus gave this parable in 33 C.E. on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. Some of his listeners thought that he would set up his Kingdom as soon as they arrived in Jerusalem. To correct that notion and to show that the establishment of the Kingdom was yet a long way off, Jesus compared himself to "a man of noble birth" who had to travel "to a distant land to secure kingly power."^[1] In Jesus' case, the "distant land" was heaven, where he would receive power as King from his Father. But Jesus knew that he would not be installed as Messianic King immediately after his return to heaven. Instead, he would sit at God's right hand and wait until the appointed time. As it turned out, that wait lasted for many centuries.—Ps. 110:1, 2; Matt. 22:43, 44; Heb. 10:12, 13.

When Will God's Kingdom Come?

14 A few days before Jesus was put to death, four of his apostles asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:4) Jesus answered by relating the extensive prophecy that is recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25. Jesus

detailed various global events that would serve as a sign identifying a time period called his “presence.” The *start* of his presence would coincide with the *establishment* of the Kingdom; and the *culmination* of his presence, with the *coming* of the Kingdom. We have ample proof that Jesus’ prophecy has been undergoing fulfillment since 1914.^[2] Hence, that year marked the start of his presence and the establishment of the Kingdom.

15 When, though, will God’s Kingdom finally come? Jesus did not reveal exactly when that would happen. (Matt. 24:36) But he did say something that should assure us that it is very near indeed. Jesus indicated that the Kingdom would come after “this generation” witnessed the fulfillment of the prophetic sign. (**Read Matthew 24:32-34.**) To whom does the expression “this generation” refer? Let us take a closer look at Jesus’ words.

16 “This generation.” Did Jesus have in mind unbelievers? No. Consider his audience. Jesus related this prophecy to a few apostles who had “approached him privately.” (Matt. 24:3) The apostles would soon be anointed with holy spirit. Note also the context. Before he spoke about “this generation,” Jesus said: “Now learn this illustration from the fig tree: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors.” Jesus’ anointed followers—not unbelievers—would see the things he foretold and would discern their significance, namely, that Jesus “is near at the doors.” Therefore, when Jesus spoke of “this generation,” he had in mind his *anointed followers*.

17 “Will by no means pass away until all these things happen.” How will those words prove true? To answer that, we need to know two things: the meaning both of “generation” and of “all these things.” The term “generation” often refers to people of varying ages whose lives overlap during a particular period of time. A generation is not overly long, and it comes to an end. (Ex. 1:6) The expression “all these things” includes all the foretold events during Jesus’ presence, from its beginning in 1914 until its culmination at the “great tribulation.”—Matt. 24:21.

18 How, then, may we understand Jesus’ words about “this generation”? The generation consists of two overlapping groups of anointed ones—the first is made up of anointed ones who saw the beginning of the fulfillment of the sign in 1914 and the second, anointed ones who for a

15, 16. To whom do the words “this generation” refer?

17. What is the meaning of the expressions “generation” and “all these things”?

18, 19. How may we understand Jesus’ words about “this generation,” and what may we conclude?

FOOTNOTE

[2] For more information, see chapter 9 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

20. What vital field of study will be discussed in this publication, and what will be examined in the next chapter?

FOOTNOTE

[3] Anyone who was anointed after the death of the last of the anointed ones in the first group—that is, after those who witnessed the “beginning of pangs of distress” in 1914—would not be part of “this generation.”—Matt. 24:8.

time were contemporaries of the first group. At least some of those in the second group will live to see the beginning of the coming tribulation. The two groups form one generation because their lives as anointed Christians overlapped for a time.^[3]

¹⁹ What may we conclude? Well, we know that the sign of Jesus’ presence in Kingdom power is clearly evident around the globe. We also see that the anointed ones who are still alive and part of “this generation” are getting on in years; yet, they will not all die off before the great tribulation begins. Therefore, we can conclude that very soon indeed God’s Kingdom will come and exercise its rule over the earth! How thrilling it will be to witness the fulfillment of the prayer that Jesus taught us: “Let your Kingdom come”!

²⁰ Let us never forget the words that Jehovah himself spoke from heaven regarding his Son: “Listen to him.” As true Christians, we are eager to heed that divine direction. We are keenly interested in everything that Jesus said and taught about God’s Kingdom. What that Kingdom has already accomplished and will do in the future is the vital field of study that will be discussed in this publication. The next chapter will examine the exciting developments that surrounded the birth of God’s Kingdom in heaven.

GENERATION

(Matt. 24:32-34)

Jesus indicated that the Kingdom will come after “this generation” has witnessed the fulfillment of the prophetic sign (See paragraphs 17, 18)

1914

“This Generation”

Destruction of
Babylon the Great

GROUP 1:
Anointed ones who saw the beginning
of the fulfillment of the sign in 1914

GROUP 2:
Anointed ones who were contemporaries
of the first group; some of these will live to
see the great tribulation



The Kingdom Is Born in Heaven

2

DO YOU ever wonder what it might have been like to live during some great turning point in history? Many do. But consider: If you had lived in such a momentous time, would you have personally witnessed the key events that brought about change? Perhaps not. Events that spell doom for old regimes and fill the pages of history books often take place out of the public eye. In a sense, much of history unfolds behind closed doors—in throne rooms, in private council chambers, or in government offices. Nonetheless, such changes affect millions of lives.

² What about the greatest event ever to occur in the history of the world? That event has touched millions of lives. Yet, it took place out of human view. We refer, of course, to the birth in heaven of God's Kingdom, the long-promised Messianic government that will soon bring this whole world system to its end. (**Read Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45.**) Since humans did not witness that momentous birth, should we conclude that Jehovah hid the event from mankind? Or, rather, did he prepare his loyal people for it beforehand? Let us see.

“My Messenger . . . Will Clear Up a Way Before Me”

³ From ancient times, Jehovah purposed to prepare his people for the birth of the Messianic Kingdom. For instance, consider the prophecy of Malachi 3:1: “Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will clear up a way before me. And suddenly the true Lord, whom you are seeking, will come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant will come, in whom you take delight.”

⁴ In the modern-day fulfillment, when did Jehovah, “the true Lord,” come to inspect those who were serving in the earthly courtyard of his spiritual temple? The prophecy explains that Jehovah would come with “the messenger of the

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

How God's people were prepared for the birth of the Kingdom

1, 2. What was the greatest event ever to occur in world history, and why is it not surprising that it went unseen by human eyes?

3-5. (a) Who was “the messenger of the covenant” mentioned at Malachi 3:1? (b) What would happen before “the messenger of the covenant” would come to the temple?

6. Who acted as the foretold “messenger” that came first to prepare God’s people for the events ahead?

7. 8. (a) During the 1800’s, who began to expose the falseness of the immortality of the soul doctrine? (b) C. T. Russell and his close associates exposed what other teachings as false?

9. How did *Zion’s Watch Tower* expose as false the Trinity doctrine?

covenant.” Who was that? None other than the Messianic King, Jesus Christ! (Luke 1:68-73) As the newly installed Ruler, he would inspect and refine God’s people on earth. —1 Pet. 4:17.

⁵ Who, though, was the other “messenger,” the first one mentioned at Malachi 3:1? This prophetic figure would be on the scene well before the Messianic King’s presence. In the decades before 1914, did anyone “clear up a way” before the Messianic King?

⁶ Throughout this publication, we will find answers to such questions in the thrilling history of Jehovah’s modern-day people. This history shows that in the latter part of the 19th century, one small group of faithful people was emerging as the only body of genuine Christians in a vast field of imitations. That group came to be known as the Bible Students. Those taking the lead among them—Charles T. Russell and his close associates—did, indeed, act as the foretold “messenger,” giving spiritual direction to God’s people and preparing them for the events ahead. Let us consider four ways in which the “messenger” did so.

Worshipping in Truth

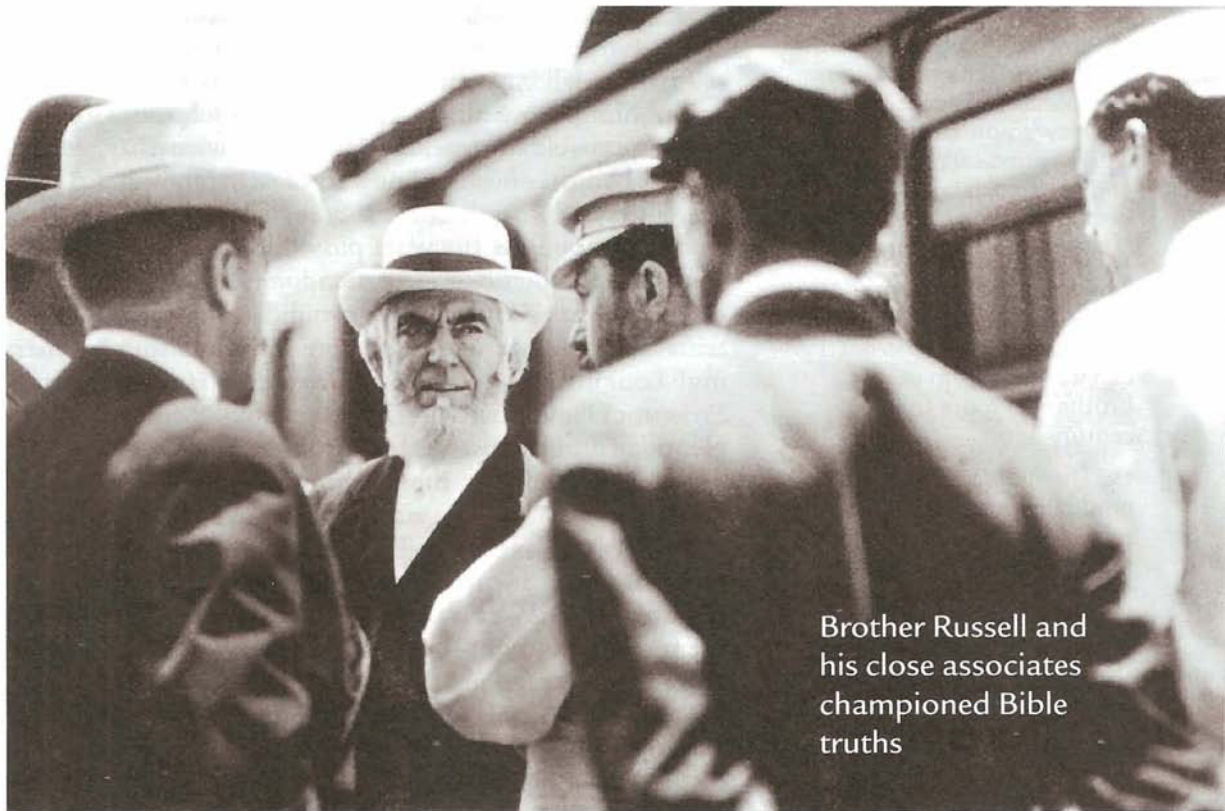
⁷ Those Bible Students studied prayerfully; they agreed on, collected together, and published clear doctrinal truths. For centuries, the world of Christendom had been enveloped in spiritual darkness; many of its teachings were rooted in paganism. A prime example is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. During the 1800’s, though, a few sincere students of the Bible scrutinized that teaching and saw that it had no support in God’s Word. Henry Grew, George Stetson, and George Storrs wrote and lectured boldly, exposing that satanic lie.^[1] Their work, in turn, had a profound impact on C. T. Russell and his close associates.

⁸ The little group of Bible Students found that other doctrines linked to the immortality of the soul were likewise confusing and false—for example, the teaching that all good people go to heaven or that God torments the immortal souls of the wicked in eternal hellfire. Russell and his close associates boldly exposed those lies in numerous articles, books, pamphlets, tracts, and published sermons.

⁹ Likewise, the Bible Students exposed as false the widely revered Trinity doctrine. In 1887, *Zion’s Watch Tower* remarked: “The Scriptures are very clear concerning the distinct individuality and exact relationship of Jehovah and

FOOTNOTE

[1] To learn more about Grew, Stetson, and Storrs, see the book *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, pages 45-46.



Brother Russell and his close associates championed Bible truths

our Lord Jesus.” The article then noted how amazing it was that “the idea of a triune God—three Gods in one, and at the same time, one God in three—should ever have gained prominence and general acceptance. But the fact that it is so, only goes to show how soundly the church slept while the enemy bound her in the chains of error.”

¹⁰ As its full title suggested, the journal *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence* was deeply concerned with prophecies pertaining to Christ’s presence. The faithful anointed writers who contributed to that journal saw that Daniel’s prophecy regarding the “seven times” had a bearing on the timing of the fulfillment of God’s purposes regarding the Messianic Kingdom. As early as the 1870’s, they pointed to 1914 as the year when those seven times would end. (Dan. 4:25; Luke 21:24) Although our brothers of that era did not yet grasp the full significance of that marked year, they proclaimed what they knew far and wide, with long-lasting effects.

10. How did the *Watch Tower* point to 1914 as a marked year?

11, 12. (a) To whom did Brother Russell give credit for what he taught?

(b) How important was the work carried out by Russell and his associates in the decades prior to 1914?

13, 14. (a) How did the “messenger” help to prepare the way for the Messianic King? (b) What can we learn from our brothers of more than a century ago?

15. The Bible Students gradually came to what realization? (See also footnote.)

¹¹ Neither Russell nor his faithful associates claimed credit for uncovering and grasping those vital spiritual truths. Russell gave much credit to others who had come before him. Above all, he gave credit to Jehovah God, the one responsible for teaching His people what they need to know when they need to know it. Clearly, Jehovah did bless the efforts of Russell and his associates to sift out truth from falsehood. As the years passed, they stood ever more apart and distinct from Christendom.

¹² The work those faithful men did in championing doctrinal truth in the decades before 1914 was simply amazing! Looking back, *The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* of November 1, 1917, commented: “Millions of people today find themselves free from the burden of fear, imposed upon them by the teachings of hell fire and other false doctrines . . . The tide of Truth, which began more than forty years ago, is still steadily rising and will continue to rise until it fills the whole earth; and its opponents might as well try to sweep back with an ordinary broom the waves of a mighty ocean as to prevent the Truth from spreading throughout the earth.”

¹³ Consider this: Would people have been prepared for the beginning of Christ's presence if they were not able to distinguish Jesus from his Father, Jehovah? Surely not! Nor would they have been prepared if they thought that immortality was the automatic possession of all and not a precious gift bestowed on only relatively few of Christ's footstep followers; nor if they thought that God tormented people in hellfire for all eternity with no hope of relief! Without doubt, the “messenger” prepared the way for the Messianic King!

¹⁴ And what about us today? What can we learn from our brothers of more than a century ago? We likewise need to be avid readers and students of God's Word. (John 17:3) As this materialistic world becomes emaciated, spiritually speaking, may our appetite for spiritual food grow ever stronger!—**Read 1 Timothy 4:15.**

“Get Out of Her, My People”

¹⁵ The Bible Students taught that it was necessary to break away from worldly churches. In 1879, the *Watch Tower* referred to the “Babylon church.” Was it talking about the papacy? The Roman Catholic Church? Protestant denominations had for centuries made such applications of Babylon as a prophetic type in Scripture. However, the

Bible Students gradually came to the realization that *all* the churches of Christendom were included in modern-day “Babylon.” Why? Because they all taught doctrinal lies such as those discussed above.^[2] In time, our publications became more and more direct about what honesthearted members of Babylon’s churches should do.

16 For example, in 1891, Volume III of *Millennial Dawn* discussed God’s rejection of modern-day Babylon and noted: “The whole system—a system of systems—is rejected.” It added that all those “not in sympathy with her false doctrines and practices are now called to separate themselves from her.”

17 In January 1900, the *Watch Tower* offered counsel to those who still kept their names on the denominational rolls of Christendom’s churches and who rationalized their course, saying, “My sympathies are all with the truth, and I rarely attend other meetings.” The article asked: “But is this right—to be half out and half in Babylon? Is this the obedience required . . . and pleasing and acceptable to God? Surely not. He [the church member] publicly entered into a *covenant* with the denomination when he joined it, and he should faithfully live up to all the conditions of that covenant until he . . . *publicly* renounces or cancels his membership.” Over the years, that message became stronger.^[3] Servants of Jehovah must renounce all ties with false religion.

18 If such warnings to get out of Babylon the Great had not been sounded regularly, would Christ as the newly installed King have had a body of prepared, anointed servants on earth? Surely not, for only Christians who are free from Babylon’s grip can worship Jehovah “with spirit and truth.” (John 4:24) Are we today likewise determined to keep free from false religion? Let us keep obeying the command: “Get out of her, my people!”—**Read Revelation 18:4.**

Gathering for Worship

19 The Bible Students taught that fellow believers should gather together for worship, where that was possible. For genuine Christians, it is not enough to get out of false religion. It is vital to take part in pure worship as well. From its early issues, the *Watch Tower* encouraged readers to gather together for worship. For example, in July 1880, Brother Russell reported on a speaking tour he had made, commenting on how encouraging the many meetings had been. He then urged readers to send in cards regarding their progress—some of which would be published

16, 17. (a) How did Volume III of *Millennial Dawn* and the *Watch Tower* urge people to remove themselves from false religion? (b) What factor diluted such early warnings? (See footnote.)

18. Why was it necessary for people to get out of Babylon the Great?

19, 20. How did the *Watch Tower* encourage God’s people to gather together for worship?

FOOTNOTES

[2] Although the Bible Students saw the need to withdraw from religious organizations that were friends of the world, for years they continued to view as Christian brothers individuals who, although not Bible Students, professed belief in the ransom and claimed to be dedicated to God.

[3] One factor that diluted the force of such early warnings was that they were applied mainly to Christ’s little flock of 144,000. We will see in Chapter 5 that prior to 1935, it was thought that the “great multitude,” as described at Revelation 7:9, 10 in the *King James Version*, would include countless members of the churches of Christendom and that they would be made a secondary heavenly class as a reward for siding with Christ at the very end.



Charles Russell with a group of early Bible Students in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1909

21. The congregation in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, set what example regarding meetings and shepherding?

in the journal's pages. To what end? "Let us all know . . . how the Lord prospers you; whether you keep up your meetings with those of like precious faith."

²⁰ In 1882, an article called "Assembling Together" appeared in the *Watch Tower*. The article exhorted Christians to hold meetings "for mutual edification, encouragement and strengthening." It noted: "It matters not whether there is any one learned or talented among you. Let each one bring his own Bible, paper, and pencil, and avail yourselves of as many helps in the way of a Concordance, . . . as possible. Choose your subject; ask for the Spirit's guidance in the understanding of it; then read, *think*, compare scripture with scripture and you will assuredly be guided into truth."

²¹ The Bible Students had their headquarters in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. There they set a fine example by gathering together in obedience to the inspired counsel recorded at **Hebrews 10:24, 25. (Read.)** Much later, an elderly brother named Charles Capen recalled attending those

meetings as a boy. He wrote: "I still remember one of the scripture texts painted on the wall of the Society's assembly hall. 'One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.' That text has always stood out in my mind—there is no clergy-laity distinction among Jehovah's people." (Matt. 23:8) Brother Capen also recalled the stimulating meetings, the warm encouragement, and Brother Russell's diligent efforts to shepherd every member of the congregation personally.

22 Faithful people responded to this example and to the instruction given. Congregations formed in other states, such as Ohio and Michigan, and then all over North America and in other lands. Consider: Would faithful people have truly been prepared for the presence of Christ if they had not been trained to obey the inspired counsel to meet together for worship? Surely not! What about us today? We need to be just as determined to attend Christian meetings faithfully, seeking every opportunity to worship together and be spiritually upbuilding to one another.

Zealous Preaching

23 **The Bible Students taught that all the anointed must be preachers of the truth.** In 1885, the *Watch Tower* commented: "We should not forget that every member of the anointed body is anointed to preach (Isa. 61:1), called

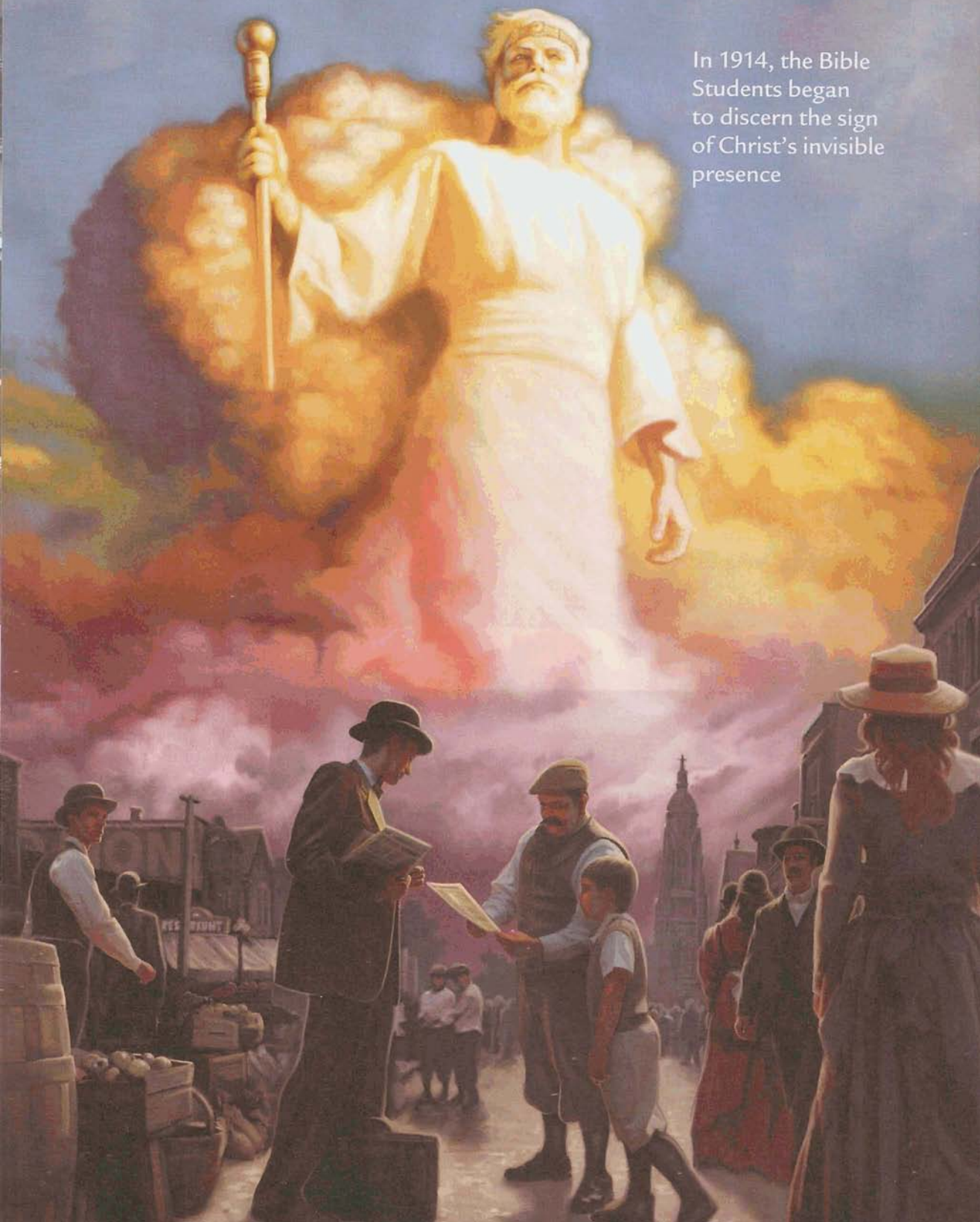
22. How did faithful people respond to the encouragement to attend Christian meetings, and what lesson may we learn from them?

23. How did the *Watch Tower* make it plain that all anointed ones must be preachers of the truth?



A colporteur. Note the "Chart of the Ages" painted on the side of the carriage

In 1914, the Bible
Students began
to discern the sign
of Christ's invisible
presence



to the ministry.” An 1888 issue contained this exhortation: “Our commission is plain . . . If we ignore it and excuse ourselves, we are certainly slothful servants, proving our unworthiness of the high position to which we are called.”

²⁴ Brother Russell and his close associates did more than encourage people to preach. They also began to produce tracts called *Bible Students' Tracts*, which were later also called *Old Theology Quarterly*. Readers of the *Watch Tower* received these to distribute to the public without charge.

²⁵ Those who devoted themselves to the ministry full-time were called colporteurs. Charles Capen, mentioned earlier, was among them. He later recalled: “I used maps made by the United States Government Geological Survey to guide my covering the territory in Pennsylvania. These maps showed all the roads, making it possible to reach all sections of each county on foot. Sometimes after a three-day trip through the country taking orders for the books in the *Studies in the Scriptures* series, I would hire a horse and buggy so that I could make the deliveries. I often stopped and stayed overnight with farmers. Those were the pre-automobile days.”

²⁶ Such early efforts at preaching certainly required courage and zeal. Would true Christians have been prepared for Christ's reign if they had not been taught the importance of the preaching work? Assuredly not! After all, that work was to become an outstanding feature of Christ's presence. (Matt. 24:14) God's people had to be prepared to make that lifesaving work the central feature of their lives. We today do well to ask ourselves: ‘Is the preaching work central to my life? Do I make sacrifices in order to have a full share in that activity?’

God's Kingdom Is Born!

²⁷ Finally, the momentous year 1914 arrived. As we discussed at the outset of this chapter, there were no human eyewitnesses to the glorious events in heaven. However, the apostle John was given a vision that described matters in symbolic terms. Imagine this: John witnesses “a great sign” in heaven. God's “woman”—his organization of spirit creatures in heaven—is pregnant and gives birth to a male child. This symbolic child, we are told, is soon to “shepherd all the nations with an iron rod.” Upon its birth, though, the child is “snatched away to God and to his throne.” A loud voice in heaven says: “Now have come to pass the salvation

24, 25. (a) How did Russell and his close associates do more than encourage people to preach? (b) How did one colporteur describe his work in the “preautomobile days”?

26. (a) Why did God's people need to engage in the preaching work in order to be prepared for Christ's reign? (b) What questions do we do well to ask ourselves?

27, 28. What did the apostle John witness in vision, and how did Satan and his demons react to the birth of the Kingdom?

We do well to ask ourselves, ‘Is the preaching work central to my life?’

29, 30. Following the birth of the Messianic Kingdom, how did conditions change (a) on earth? (b) in heaven?

31. What did Malachi foretell about the period of refining, and how did that prophecy begin to see fulfillment? (See also the footnote.)

32. What internal turmoil afflicted God's people following 1916?

and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ."—Rev. 12:1, 5, 10.

28 Without doubt, John saw in vision the birth of the Messianic Kingdom. That event was surely a glorious one, but it did not please everyone. Satan and his demons warred against the faithful angels, who were under the leadership of Michael, or Christ. The outcome? We read: "Down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him."—Rev. 12:7, 9.

29 Long before 1914, the Bible Students said that a time of trouble would begin in that marked year. But even they could not have imagined how accurate that prediction would turn out to be. As John's vision revealed, Satan would then begin to have an even greater impact on human society: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time." (Rev. 12:12) In 1914, the first world war broke out and the sign of Christ's presence in kingly power began to see global fulfillment. The "last days" of this system of things had begun.—2 Tim. 3:1.

30 However, there was joy in heaven. Satan and his demons were banished forever. John's account reads: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them!" (Rev. 12:12) With the heavens cleansed and Jesus enthroned as King, the Messianic Kingdom was now poised to act in behalf of God's people on earth. What action would it take? As we saw at the outset of this chapter, Christ as "the messenger of the covenant" would first act as a refiner of God's servants here on earth. What would that mean?

A Time of Testing

31 Malachi foretold that the refining process would not be easy. He wrote: "Who will endure the day of his coming, and who will be able to stand when he appears? For he will be like the fire of a refiner and like the lye of laundrymen." (Mal. 3:2) How true those words proved to be! Beginning in 1914, God's people on earth faced a succession of major tests and hardships. As World War I raged, many Bible Students experienced vicious persecution and imprisonment.^[4]

32 From within, the organization suffered turmoil as well. In 1916, Brother Russell died at only 64 years of age, leaving many of God's people in shock. His death revealed that some had been placing too much emphasis on one

FOOTNOTE

[4] In September 1920, *The Golden Age* (now *Awake!*) published a special issue detailing numerous instances of wartime persecution—some of it shockingly brutal—in Canada, England, Germany, and the United States. In contrast, the decades prior to the first world war saw very little persecution of that kind.

exemplary man. Though Brother Russell wanted no such reverence, a measure of creature worship had grown up around him. Many thought that the progressive revelation of truth had ended with his death, and some bitterly resisted efforts to move forward. That attitude contributed to an outbreak of apostasy that divided the organization.

³³ Unfulfilled expectations were another test. Though the *Watch Tower* had rightly pointed to 1914 as the year when the Gentile Times would end, the brothers did not yet understand what would take place in that year. (Luke 21:24) They thought that in 1914, Christ would take his anointed bride class to heaven to rule with him there. Those hopes were not realized. Late in 1917, *The Watch Tower* announced that a 40-year harvest period would end in the spring of 1918. But the preaching work did not end. It continued to prosper after that date passed. The magazine suggested that the harvest had indeed ended but that a period of gleaning remained. Still, many stopped serving Jehovah because of disappointment.

³⁴ A daunting test arose in 1918. J. F. Rutherford, who succeeded C. T. Russell in taking the lead among God's people, was arrested along with seven other responsible brothers. They were unjustly sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. For a time, the work of God's people may have seemed paralyzed. Many among the clergy of Christendom rejoiced. They assumed that with the "leaders" imprisoned, the headquarters in Brooklyn closed up, and the preaching work under attack in America and Europe, those pestilent Bible Students were "dead"—no longer a threat. (Rev. 11:3, 7-10) How wrong they were!

A Time of Revival!

³⁵ Little did the enemies of the truth know that Jesus allowed these hardships to afflict his people only because Jehovah was then sitting "as a refiner and cleanser of silver." (Mal. 3:3) Jehovah and his Son were sure that the faithful ones would emerge from those fiery tests refined, purified, and better suited than ever for service to the King. From early in 1919, it became clear that God's spirit had done what the enemies of his people thought impossible. The faithful ones were revived! (Rev. 11:11) At that time, Christ evidently fulfilled a key feature of the sign of the last days. He appointed "the faithful and discreet slave," a small group of anointed men who would take the lead among his

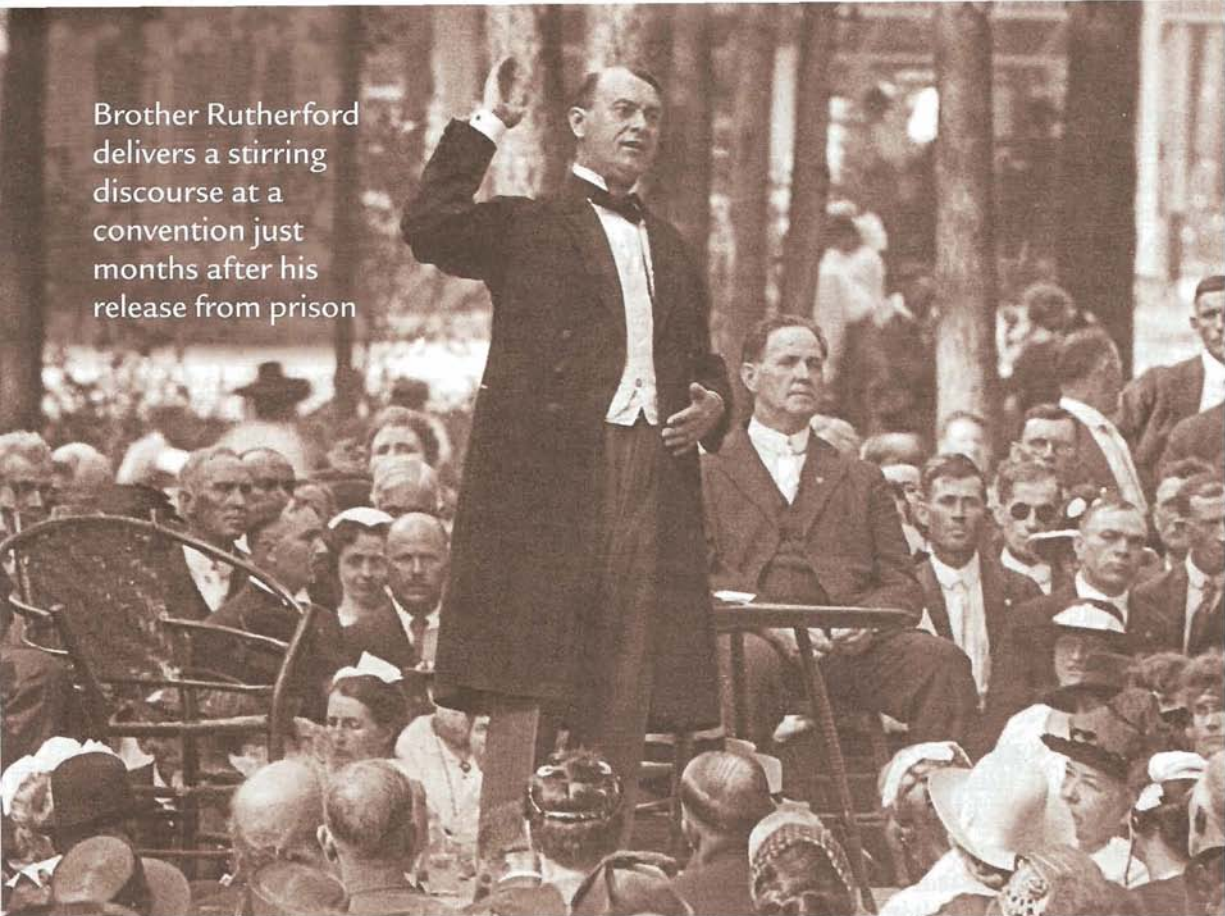
33. How did unfulfilled expectations test God's people?

34. What daunting test arose in 1918, and why did Christendom think that God's people were "dead"?

35. Why did Jesus allow hardships to afflict his followers, and what action did he take to help them?



Brother Rutherford delivers a stirring discourse at a convention just months after his release from prison



36. What showed that God's people were reviving spiritually?

37. In the years after 1919, how did some prove disloyal?

people by dispensing spiritual food at the proper time. —Matt. 24:45-47.

³⁶ Brother Rutherford and his associates were released from prison on March 26, 1919. A convention was soon scheduled for that September. Plans got under way to start up a second journal, to be called *The Golden Age*. A companion to *The Watch Tower*, it was designed for use in the field ministry.^[5] The same year saw the publication of the first issue of the *Bulletin*, which is now called *Our Kingdom Ministry*. From the start, it has always been a stimulus to the field ministry. Without a doubt, from 1919 onward the personal, house-to-house ministry came increasingly to the fore.

³⁷ The preaching work continued to refine Christ's servants, for the proud and arrogant among them had no stomach for such humble work. Those who would not get in step with the work parted company with the faithful ones. In the years following 1919, some disloyal ones were

FOOTNOTE

[5] For many years *The Watch Tower* was intended mainly for members of the little flock for their personal edification.

embittered and resorted to slander and libel, even siding with the persecutors of Jehovah's faithful servants.

38 Despite such attacks, though, Christ's followers on earth continued to thrive and to prosper spiritually. Their every success, their every victory since then, furnishes us with convincing proof that God's Kingdom rules! Only by God's active support and blessing—which he provides through his Son and the Messianic Kingdom—could a group of mere imperfect humans win victory after victory over Satan and this wicked system of things!—**Read Isaiah 54:17.**

39 In the chapters that follow, we will examine what God's Kingdom has accomplished on earth in the century since it was born in heaven. Each section of this book will cover a distinct aspect of the Kingdom work here on earth. In each chapter, a review box will help us individually to determine just how real the Kingdom is to us. In the concluding chapters, we will discuss what to expect when the Kingdom comes in the near future to destroy the wicked and usher in a paradise earth. What will studying this publication do for you?

40 Satan wants to erode your faith in God's Kingdom. But Jehovah wants to strengthen your faith so that it will protect you and keep you strong. (Eph. 6:16) Therefore, we urge you to study this publication prayerfully. Keep asking yourself, 'Is God's Kingdom *real* to me?' The more real it is to you now, the more likely it is that you will be on hand, faithfully and actively supporting that Kingdom, on the day when everyone alive will see that God's Kingdom is real and that it is ruling!

38. What do the successes and victories of Christ's followers on earth furnish for us?

39, 40. (a) What are some of the features of this publication? (b) What can studying this book do for you?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- Who helped to prepare Jesus' true followers for the birth of the Kingdom?
- In what ways were true Christians prepared for the rule of God's Kingdom?
- What features mark the Kingdom as a real government? (See the box "God's Kingdom—A Real Government.")
- How can you imitate Christ's faithful followers of a century ago as you support the Kingdom today?

GOD'S KINGDOM

A REAL GOVERNMENT

Is God's Kingdom a real government? Consider just a few of the features of God's Kingdom. Ask yourself, 'Does not each feature show that the Kingdom is just as real as—and far superior to—any human government on earth today?'



A RULER

Enthroned in 1914, Jesus Christ is a powerful, just, wise, and merciful King who is humble before Jehovah God. (Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-3) Unlike imperfect human rulers, he cannot be corrupted, nor is he hampered by fractious congresses and parliaments or self-seeking lobbyists and special-interest groups.

LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL POWERS

Jesus' life and example while on earth form the basis for a perfect law, "the law of the Christ."—Gal. 6:2; 1 Pet. 2:21.

Jehovah has entrusted all judging to his Son, and Jesus carries out that assignment perfectly, as no human judge ever could.—John 5:22.

A BODY OF ADMINISTRATORS

Jesus has 144,000 corulers who will share in administering his just reign over the earth. A key objective of his rule is to reconcile humans to God, so his corulers will also serve as priests for that purpose.—Rev. 14:1; 20:6.



AN ARMY

As Leader of Jehovah's vast army of mighty angels, Jesus commands the most powerful military force ever to exist. It will soon wage war on all wickedness.—Ps. 45:1, 3-5; Rev. 19:11, 14-16.



A SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

Jesus' throne is in heaven, at the side of his Father. Heaven is Jehovah's "lofty abode of holiness and glory." (Isa. 63:15) Is it a real place? Yes, more so than any capital city or government building you can see, for heavenly things do not decay.—Matt. 6:20.

A TERRITORY ON EARTH

Today, Jesus' subjects are like foreigners who live as law-abiding citizens in every land and nation. But Jehovah has provided a spiritual land for them, a realm of activity in which they carry out the King's will. (Isa. 60:2; 66:8) Soon, Jesus' Kingdom will claim the entire earth as its physical territory.—Ps. 72:8.



HEALTH



HOUSING



NOURISHMENT



EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

God's Kingdom will soon fulfill God's promises to provide all these blessings and more.—Ps. 72:16; Isa. 2:3; 33:24; 35:6; 65:21.

A POPULATION OF LOYAL SUBJECTS

"A ruler without subjects is ruined," explains the Bible, whereas "a multitude of people are a king's majesty." (Prov. 14:28) The Kingdom's population of loyal subjects has surged in number to well over seven and a half million.—Ps. 72:8; Isa. 60:22.



PREPARED FOR THE BIRTH OF THE KINGDOM

Consider some historical events from the decades leading up to 1914. Can you see how these developments helped God's people to be prepared for the birth of the Messianic Kingdom?

Mid-1800's

Henry Grew, George Stetson, and George Storrs scrutinize and expose the falseness of the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul

1868 or 1869

Charles T. Russell begins a careful examination of the doctrines of Christendom's churches and finds misinterpretations of the Scriptures; Russell's "wavering faith" is reestablished after he hears a sermon by Adventist preacher Jonas Wendell



1870

Brother Russell forms a Bible study group; they begin a systematic study of the Bible

1870-1875

Truths regarding the soul, the ransom, and the manner of Christ's return become clearer

1876

An article by C. T. Russell, published in the *Bible Examiner*, points to 1914 as the end of the Gentile Times

1877

The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return is published to clarify truths regarding Christ's presence

1879

The first issue of *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* is published

Babylon the Great is recognized as being associated with the nominal churches of Christendom



1880

Brother Russell tours the northeastern United States to visit and strengthen study groups

1881

Multipage tracts (some over 100 pages long) are published and provided to *Watch Tower* readers for free public distribution

The *Watch Tower* invites all readers to commemorate the Memorial in Allegheny, Pennsylvania

Colporteur work begins

Articles such as "Wanted 1,000 Preachers" and "Anointed to Preach" promote the ministry

Christians who are not yet doing so are encouraged to begin holding meetings regularly

1882

An article refuting the Trinity doctrine is published

1885

Watch Tower publications reach readers on five continents

1886

The Divine Plan of the Ages is released, the first volume of the series of books later known as *Studies in the Scriptures*

The *Watch Tower* invites readers to a three-day "general meeting" to follow the Memorial of Christ's death, thus beginning the practice of holding annual conventions

1889

The Bible House is built in Allegheny, Pennsylvania

1890

The Watch Tower Society publishes Rotherham's *New Testament*, using a secular printing company

1891

C. T. Russell begins extensive tours outside the United States, seeking ways of "forwarding the spread of the Truth"

1894

Tower Tract Society representatives, acting as traveling overseers, are sent out to visit and encourage congregations



1895

The *Watch Tower* notes that some faithful ones are holding "Dawn Circles" for Bible study and recommends "the holding of these Circles everywhere"

1896

C. T. Russell publishes the booklet *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?*

1900

First branch office established in London, England
Preaching work reaches 28 countries

1903

Distribution of free tracts on Sundays, which had taken place on streets near churches, shifts to intense house-to-house campaigns
Russell's sermons begin to appear regularly in newspapers

1909

The headquarters of the Watch Tower Society moves to Brooklyn, New York



1910

The Bible Students begin to use the name International Bible Students Association

1911-1912

C. T. Russell and six companions travel some 35,000 miles on a round-the-world tour to investigate the "status and prospects of Christianity" in various lands, including China, India, Japan, and the Philippines

1914

The "Photo-Drama of Creation" is first shown in New York on January 11, then in five other cities within the next month. By the end of the year, it is seen in various forms by close to 9,000,000 people in North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand

In October, C. T. Russell announces to the Bethel family: "The Gentile times have ended; their kings have had their day." According to a sister in attendance, he added: "So we know not what awaits us"



Left:
A sister in
Alabama, U.S.A.,
playing a recorded
discourse by
Brother Rutherford,
late 1930's

Right:
Switzerland



SECTION 1

KINGDOM TRUTH

Dispensing
Spiritual Food



YOU see your Bible student's eyes light up as he grasps the meaning of the scripture you have just read together. Slowly, he says, "Do you mean that the Bible teaches that we can live in Paradise forever—right here on this earth?" Your companion in the ministry smiles and says, "Well, what did you see in the Bible?" Overwhelmed, the student shakes his head in wonderment, saying, "I just can't believe that I was never taught this before!" You recall that he said something similar just a few weeks ago when he learned for the first time that God's name is Jehovah.

Have you ever had such an experience? Many of God's people have. Few things can so vividly remind us of the precious gift we have been given—the knowledge of *the truth*! Stop and think: How did that gift come to you? In this section we will examine that question. The way that God's people have progressively received spiritual enlightenment is a vivid proof that God's Kingdom is real. For a century, its King, Jesus Christ, has been actively ensuring that God's people are taught the truth.

3

Jehovah Reveals His Purpose

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Jehovah progressively reveals understanding of his purpose, but only to those who fear him

1, 2. How has Jehovah revealed his purpose for mankind?

3, 4. Did Jehovah predestinate the path of human history? Explain.

FOOTNOTE

[1] God's name is a form of the Hebrew verb meaning "to become." Jehovah's name implies that he is the Fulfiller of his promises. See the box "The Meaning of God's Name," on page 43.

CARING parents include their children in discussions about family matters. They are discreet, however, about the amount of information that they share. They reveal only details that they feel their children are mature enough to absorb.

² Similarly, Jehovah has progressively revealed his purpose for the human family. But he has done so only when he knew that the time was right. Consider a brief overview of how Jehovah has revealed truths about the Kingdom throughout history.

Why the Need for the Kingdom?

³ Originally, the Messianic Kingdom was not part of Jehovah's purpose. Why not? Because Jehovah did not predestinate the path of human history; after all, he created humans with free will. Thus, he told Adam and Eve his purpose for mankind, stating: "Be fruitful and become many, fill the earth and subdue it." (Gen. 1:28) Jehovah also required that they respect his standards of good and bad. (Gen. 2:16, 17) Adam and Eve could have chosen to remain loyal. If they and their descendants had done so, we would not need the Kingdom ruled by Christ to fulfill God's purpose. Right now, the globe would be teeming with perfect people, all worshipping Jehovah.

⁴ The rebellion of Satan, Adam, and Eve did not cause Jehovah to abandon his purpose to fill the earth with a perfect human family. Instead, Jehovah adapted his method of fulfilling it. His purpose is not like a train that must run on a certain track to reach its destination and can be derailed by the actions of others. Once Jehovah states his purpose, no force in the universe can prevent its fulfillment. **(Read Isaiah 55:11.)** If a challenge threatens to block one track, Jehovah uses another.^[1] (Ex. 3:14, 15) When he sees

fit, he informs his loyal servants of the new method he will use to accomplish his purpose.

⁵ In response to the rebellion in Eden, Jehovah purposed to set up the Kingdom. (Matt. 25:34) At that dark point in human history, Jehovah began to shed light on the instrument that he would use to restore mankind and undo the hurt caused by Satan's futile grab for power. (Gen. 3:14-19) Even so, Jehovah did not disclose details about the Kingdom all at once.

Jehovah Begins to Reveal Truths About the Kingdom

⁶ With the very first prophecy, Jehovah promised that a certain "offspring" would crush the serpent. (**Read Genesis 3:15.**) However, the identities of that offspring and the offspring of the serpent were not revealed at that time. In fact, Jehovah did not shed more light on such details for some 2,000 years.^[2]

⁷ Eventually, Jehovah chose Abraham as the one through whom the promised offspring would come. Abraham was chosen because he "listened to [Jehovah's] voice." (Gen. 22:18) We learn a key lesson from that fact—Jehovah reveals his purpose only to those who have a reverential fear of him.—**Read Psalm 25:14.**

⁸ When speaking to his friend Abraham through an angel, Jehovah for the first time revealed this vital fact about the promised offspring: He would be human. (Gen. 22:15-17; Jas. 2:23) But how would this human crush the serpent? Who was the serpent? Later revelations would shed light on those questions.

⁹ Jehovah determined that the promised offspring would come through Abraham's grandson Jacob, a man who displayed great faith in God. (Gen. 28:13-22) By means of Jacob, Jehovah disclosed that the Promised One would be a descendant of Jacob's son Judah. Jacob prophesied that this descendant of Judah would receive a "scepter," a rod symbolizing royal authority, and that to this one 'the obedience of the peoples would belong.' (Gen. 49:1, 10) With that pronouncement, Jehovah indicated that the Promised One would become a ruler, a king.

¹⁰ Some 650 years after Judah's day, Jehovah revealed more about his purpose to King David, a descendant of Judah. Jehovah described David as "a man agreeable to his heart." (1 Sam. 13:14; 17:12; Acts 13:22) Because David had a reverential fear of God, Jehovah chose to make a

5. How did Jehovah respond to the rebellion in Eden?

6. What did Jehovah promise, but what did he not reveal?

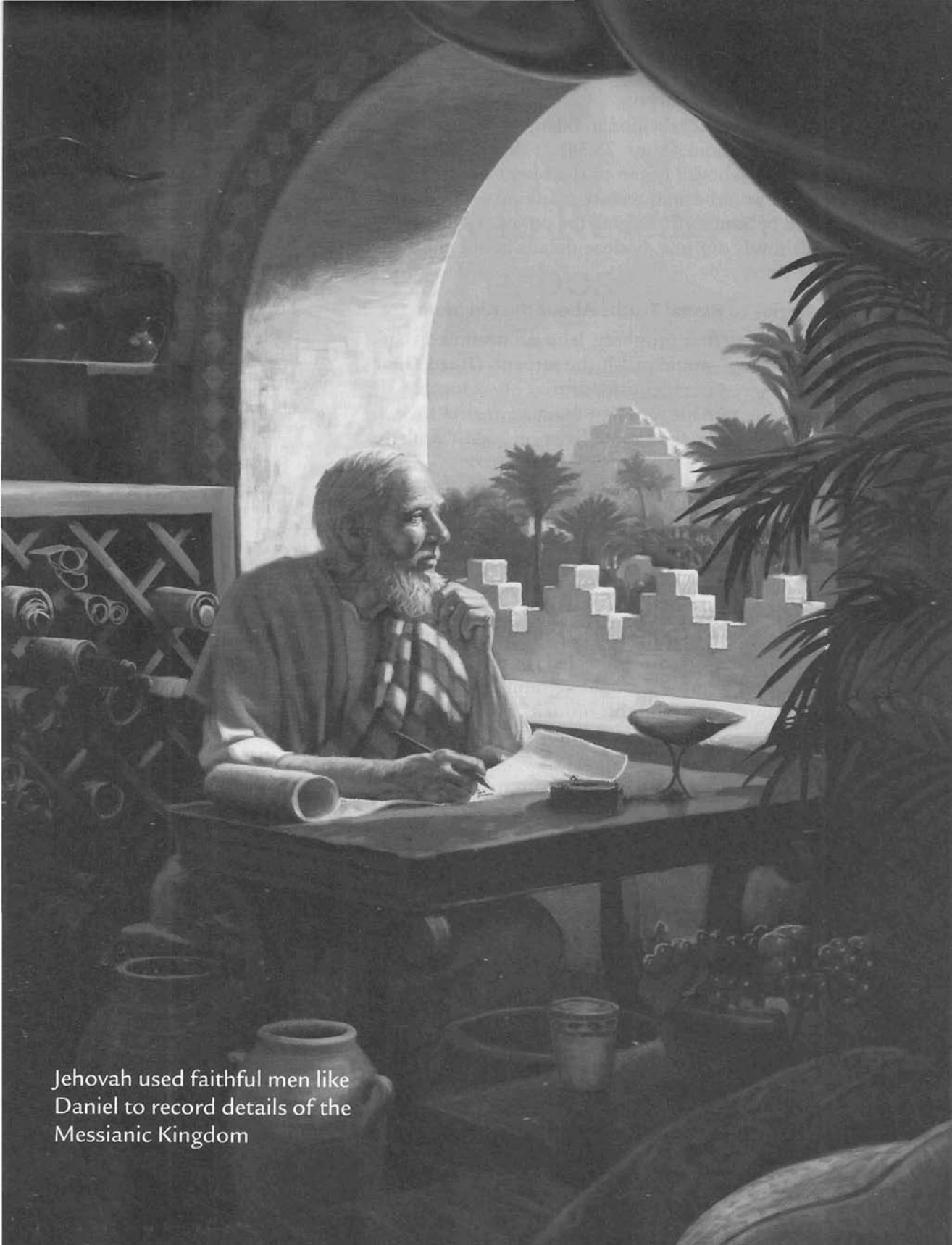
7. Why was Abraham chosen, and what key lesson do we learn from this?

8, 9. What facts about the promised offspring did Jehovah reveal to Abraham and Jacob?

10, 11. Why did Jehovah reveal his purpose to David and Daniel?

FOOTNOTE

[2] Although this amount of time may seem extensive today, we must remember that human life spans used to be much longer; there were only four life-spans that overlapped from Adam to Abraham. Adam's life overlapped the life of Lamech, Noah's father. Lamech's life overlapped that of Shem, Noah's son. Shem's life overlapped that of Abraham.—Gen. 5:5, 31; 9:29; 11:10, 11; 25:7.



Jehovah used faithful men like Daniel to record details of the Messianic Kingdom

covenant with him, promising him that one of his descendants would rule forever.—2 Sam. 7:8, 12-16.

11 About 500 years later, Jehovah used the prophet Daniel to disclose the exact year when this Anointed One, or Messiah, would appear on earth. (Dan. 9:25) Jehovah considered Daniel to be “someone very precious.” Why? Because Daniel deeply respected Jehovah and served him continually.—Dan. 6:16; 9:22, 23.

12 Even though Jehovah used such faithful prophets as Daniel to record dozens of details about the promised offspring, the Messiah, it was not yet Jehovah’s time for his servants to understand the full significance of what he inspired them to write. For example, after being given a vision involving the establishment of God’s Kingdom, Daniel was told to seal up the prophecy until the time appointed by Jehovah. At that future time, true knowledge would “become abundant.”—Dan. 12:4.

Jesus Sheds Light on God’s Purpose

13 Jehovah clearly identified Jesus as the promised offspring, the descendant of David who would rule as King. (Luke 1:30-33; 3:21, 22) When Jesus began his ministry, it was as if the sun rose on mankind’s knowledge about God’s purpose. (Matt. 4:13-17) For instance, Jesus removed any doubt about the identity of “the serpent” mentioned at Genesis 3:14, 15, calling the Devil “a murderer” and “the father of the lie.” (John 8:44) In the revelation that he gave to John, Jesus identified “the original serpent” as “the one called Devil and Satan.”^[3] (**Read Revelation 1:1; 12:9.**) In that same revelation, Jesus showed how he—the promised offspring—will finally fulfill the prophecy given in Eden and crush Satan out of existence.—Rev. 20:7-10.

14 As we saw in Chapter 1 of this book, Jesus spoke extensively about the Kingdom. However, he did not always disclose all the details his disciples wanted to know. Even when he provided specific details, it was not until later—sometimes many centuries later—that followers of Christ began to discern the full significance of the truths their Master had revealed. Consider some examples.

15 In 33 C.E., Jesus made it clearly known that the co-rulers who would assist the King of God’s Kingdom would be taken from the earth and raised to life as spirit creatures in heaven. His disciples, though, did not immediately understand this revelation. (Dan. 7:18; John 14:2-5) In that same year, Jesus indicated by means of illustrations that

12. What was Daniel told to do, and why?

13. (a) Who was the promised offspring?
(b) How did Jesus shed light on the prophecy recorded at Genesis 3:15?

14-16. Did the first-century disciples always discern the full significance of the truths Jesus revealed? Explain.

FOOTNOTE

[3] The term “Satan,” when used to identify an individual, appears 18 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, “Satan” appears more than 30 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. Appropriately, the Hebrew Scriptures did not give undue emphasis to Satan but focused on identifying the Messiah. When the Messiah arrived, he exposed Satan fully, a fact recorded in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

17. What must we do to understand truths about the Kingdom, but what is also needed?

the Kingdom would not be established until a long time after he ascended to heaven. (Matt. 25:14, 19; Luke 19:11, 12) The disciples did not comprehend this vital point and later asked the resurrected Jesus: “Are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” Jesus, however, chose not to reveal any more details at that time. (Acts 1:6, 7) Jesus also taught that there would be “other sheep,” who would not be part of the “little flock” of his corulers. (John 10:16; Luke 12:32) Followers of Christ did not properly understand the identity of those two groups until well after the Kingdom was established in 1914.

¹⁶ Jesus could have told his disciples many things while with them on earth, but he knew that they were not able to bear them. (John 16:12) Without a doubt, much knowledge about the Kingdom was revealed in the first century. However, that was not yet the time for such knowledge to become abundant.

True Knowledge Becomes Abundant in “the Time of the End”

¹⁷ Jehovah promised Daniel that during “the time of the end,” many would “rove about, and the true knowledge” of God’s purpose would become abundant. (Dan. 12:4) Those who want that knowledge must work hard to gain it. One reference work says that a form of the Hebrew verb “rove about” conveys the idea of someone examining a book very carefully and thoroughly. No matter how thoroughly we examine the Bible, though, we cannot properly understand truths about the Kingdom unless Jehovah grants us that privilege.—**Read Matthew 13:11.**

JEHOVAH PROGRESSIVELY REVEALS HIS PURPOSE

4000 B.C.E.



4026 B.C.E.
Adam created
Later, Jehovah
promises an
offspring that will
crush the serpent

3000 B.C.E.

1943 B.C.E.
Abraham
The offspring
will be a human
descendant of
Abraham

Jacob
Born 1858 B.C.E.



2000 B.C.E.

About 1070 B.C.E.
David
The offspring will
be a descendant
of King David and
will rule forever

About 1711 B.C.E.
Judah
Promise given that
the offspring will
be a king

1000 B.C.E.



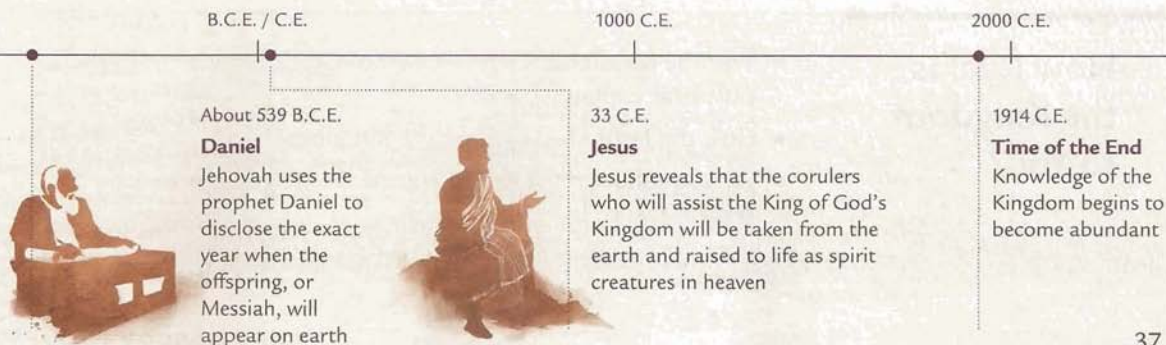
18 Just as Jehovah progressively revealed truths about the Kingdom in the period leading up to 1914, he continues to do so during the time of the end. As Chapters 4 and 5 of this book will show, over the past 100 years, God's people have had to adjust their understanding on a number of occasions. Does that fact mean that they do not have Jehovah's backing? On the contrary! He supports them. Why? Because those who fear Jehovah have displayed two qualities that he loves—faith and humility. (Heb. 11:6; Jas. 4:6) Jehovah's servants have faith that all the promises in God's Word will come true. They show humility when they admit that they misunderstood exactly how those promises would be fulfilled. That humble attitude is reflected in the March 1, 1925, issue of *The Watch Tower*, which said: "We know that the Lord is his own interpreter, that he will interpret his Word to his people in his own good way and in his own due time."

19 When the Kingdom was established in 1914, God's people had only partial knowledge of how prophecies relating to the Kingdom would be carried out. (1 Cor. 13: 9, 10, 12) In our zeal to see God's promises fulfilled, we have on occasion drawn wrong conclusions. Over the years, the wisdom of another statement made in *The Watch Tower* quoted in the preceding paragraph has become apparent. The article stated: "It seems to be a safe rule to follow, that prophecy can not be understood by us until it is fulfilled or in the course of fulfillment." Now that we are deep into the time of the end, many Kingdom prophecies have been and are being fulfilled. Because God's people are humble and willing to be corrected, Jehovah has allowed our

18. How have those who fear Jehovah displayed faith and humility?

19. What has Jehovah now allowed us to understand, and why?

"The Lord . . . will interpret his Word to his people in his own good way and in his own due time"



20, 21. How did refinements in understanding affect first-century Christians?

22. How do you feel about clarifications in our understanding of God's purpose?

understanding of his purpose to become more complete. True knowledge has become abundant!

Refinements in Understanding Sift God's People

20 When Jehovah refines our understanding of truth, our heart condition is tested. Will faith and humility move us to accept the changes? Christians living in the middle of the first century faced such a test. For example, imagine that you were a Jewish Christian living at that time. You deeply respect the Mosaic Law and take pride in your national heritage. Now you receive inspired letters from the apostle Paul stating that the Law is no longer binding and that Jehovah has rejected natural Israel in favor of gathering a spiritual Israel made up of both Jews and Gentiles. (Rom. 10:12; 11:17-24; Gal. 6:15, 16; Col. 2:13, 14) How would you have responded?

21 Humble Christians accepted Paul's inspired explanation and were blessed by Jehovah. (Acts 13:48) Others resented the refinements and wanted to cling to their own understanding. (Gal. 5:7-12) If they would not change their viewpoint, those individuals would lose the opportunity to be corulers with Christ.—2 Pet. 2:1.

22 In recent decades, Jehovah has refined our understanding of the Kingdom. For example, he has helped us to see more clearly when those who will be subjects of the Kingdom are to be separated from unresponsive ones as sheep are separated from goats. He has also taught us when the full number of the 144,000 will be filled, what the Kingdom illustrations given by Jesus mean, and when the last of the anointed will be raised to heavenly life.^[4] How do you respond to such clarifications? Is your faith strengthened? Do you see them as evidence that Jehovah continues to educate his humble people? The following material in this book will reinforce your conviction that Jehovah is progressively revealing his purpose to those who fear him.

FOOTNOTE

[4] For a discussion of some of these refinements in understanding, see the following issues of *The Watchtower*: October 15, 1995, pages 23-28; January 15, 2008, pages 20-24; July 15, 2008, pages 17-21; July 15, 2013, pages 9-14.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- Was the Messianic Kingdom part of God's original purpose? Explain.
- How did Jesus shed light on the Kingdom?
- What qualities must we cultivate if the Kingdom is to remain real to us?

Jehovah Exalts His Name

4

ON A cool but sunny Tuesday morning, December 2, 1947, a small group of anointed brothers from Bethel in Brooklyn, New York, set out to accomplish a huge task. The work was exacting, but for the next 12 years, they kept at it. At long last, on Sunday, March 13, 1960, they completed the final text for a new Bible translation. Three months later, on June 18, 1960, Brother Nathan Knorr released the final volume of the complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* to a thrilled convention audience in Manchester, England. The speaker well expressed the feelings of all in attendance when he exclaimed: ‘Today is a day for rejoicing on the part of Jehovah’s Witnesses the wide world over!’ One outstanding feature of that new translation was a special cause for joy—the frequent use of God’s personal name.

² Many translations of the Bible leave out God’s name. But Jehovah’s anointed servants took a stand against Satan’s scheme to blot the name of God out of human memory. The introduction of the *New World Translation* released that day stated: “The foremost feature of this translation is the restoration of the divine name to its rightful place.” Indeed, the *New World Translation* uses God’s personal name, Jehovah, more than 7,000 times. How outstandingly this translation has exalted the name of our heavenly Father—Jehovah!

³ In earlier years, the Bible Students understood God’s name to mean “I am that I am.” (Ex. 3:14, *King James Version*) Thus, *The Watch Tower* of January 1, 1926, noted: “The name Jehovah signifies the self-existing One, . . . the One who had no beginning and no end.” However, by the time the translators of the *New World Translation* began their work, Jehovah had helped his people to discern that his

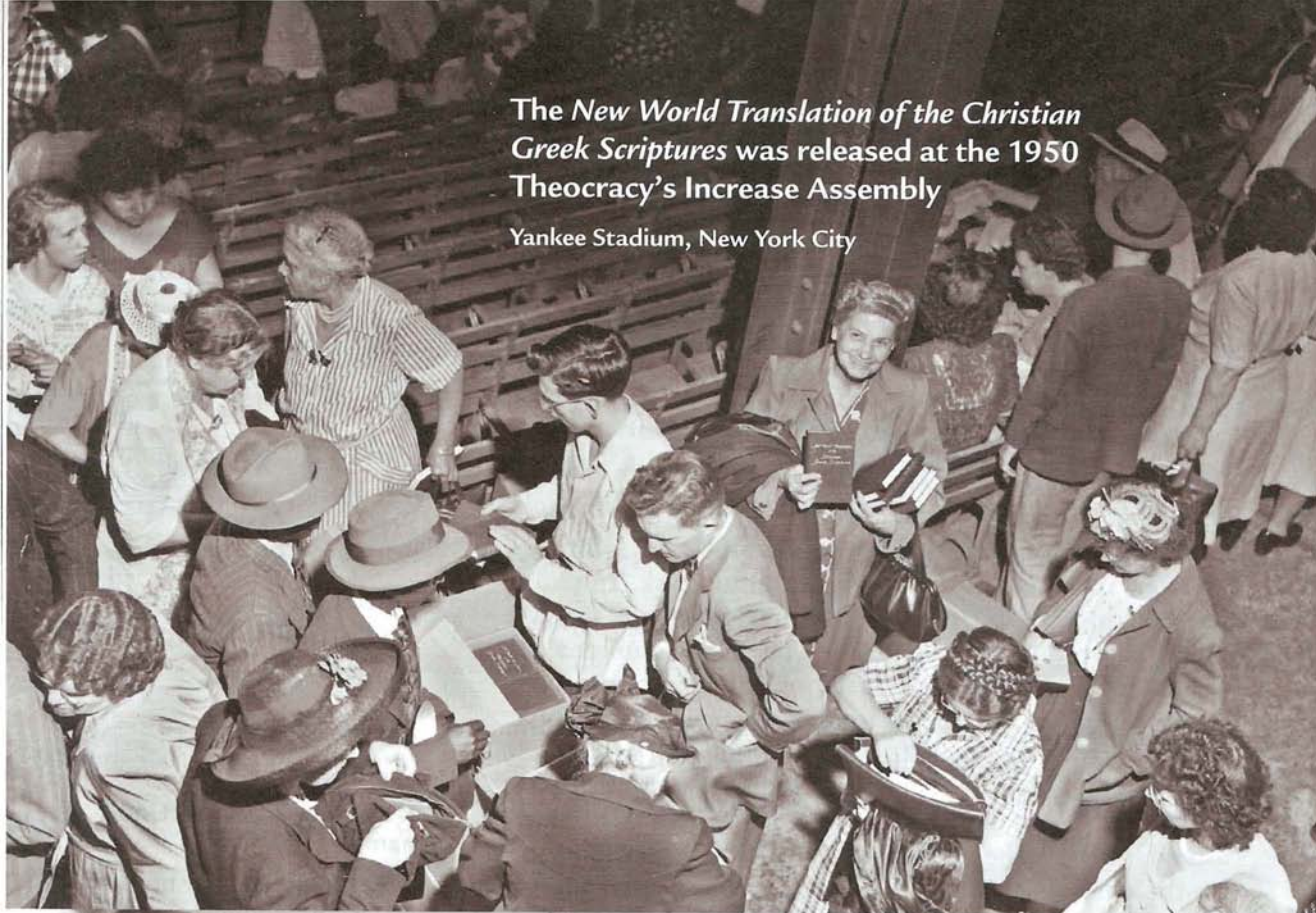
FOCUS OF CHAPTER

God’s people give due prominence to the divine name

- 1, 2. How does the *New World Translation* exalt God’s name?
3. (a) What did our brothers discern about the meaning of God’s name?
(b) How should we understand Exodus 3:13, 14?
(See the box “The Meaning of God’s Name.”)

*The New World Translation of the Christian
Greek Scriptures* was released at the 1950
Theocracy's Increase Assembly

Yankee Stadium, New York City



Ghana



name signifies not merely that he is self-existent but foremost that he is a God of purpose and activity. They learned that the name Jehovah literally means “He Causes to Become.” Yes, he caused the universe and intelligent beings to come into existence, and he continues to cause his will and purpose to become a reality. Why, though, is it so important that God’s name be exalted, and how can we have a share in exalting it?

The Sanctification of God’s Name

⁴ Jehovah wants his name to be exalted. In fact, his primary purpose is to sanctify his name, as is evident in Jesus’ first request in his model prayer: “Let your name be sanctified.” (Matt. 6:9) When making that petition, for what are we praying?

⁵ As we learned in Chapter 1 of this publication, the request “Let your name be sanctified” is one of three petitions in Jesus’ model prayer that have to do with Jehovah’s purpose. The other two are: “Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place.” (Matt. 6:10) Hence, just as we ask for Jehovah to take action to cause his Kingdom to come and his will to take place, so we ask for Jehovah to take action to sanctify his name. In other words, we are asking Jehovah to act to clear his name of all the reproach that has been heaped upon it since the rebellion in Eden. How will Jehovah respond to such a prayer? He states: “I will certainly sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the nations.” (Ezek. 36:23; 38:23) At Armageddon, when he removes wickedness, Jehovah will sanctify his name before the eyes of all creation.

⁶ Throughout history, Jehovah has allowed his servants to share in sanctifying his name. Of course, we cannot make God’s name more sacred. It is already sacred, or holy, in the absolute sense. So how can we sanctify it? Isaiah states: “Jehovah of armies—he is the One you should *regard* as holy.” And Jehovah himself said concerning his people: “They will sanctify my name . . . , and they will *stand in awe* of the God of Israel.” (Isa. 8:13; 29:23) Thus, we sanctify God’s name by regarding it as separate from and higher than all other names, by respecting what it represents, and by helping others to regard it as holy. We especially demonstrate our awe and reverence for God’s name when we recognize Jehovah as our Ruler and obey him with all our heart.—Prov. 3:1; Rev. 4:11.

4, 5. (a) For what do we ask when we pray: “Let your name be sanctified”?
(b) How and when will God sanctify his name?

6. How can we share in sanctifying God’s name?

7, 8. (a) Why did it take time before God's people could bear his name? (b) What will we now consider?

9, 10. (a) Why did early *Watch Tower* articles focus on Jesus? (b) What change occurred from 1919 onward, and with what results? (See also the box "How *The Watchtower* Has Exalted God's Name.")

11, 12. (a) In what way did our publications change soon after 1919? (b) To what was Jehovah drawing the attention of his servants, and why?

Prepared to Bear and Exalt God's Name

⁷ God's servants in modern times have used God's name in their publications since the 1870's. For instance, *Zion's Watch Tower* of August 1879 and *Songs of the Bride*, a songbook published that same year, mention the name Jehovah. Still, it seems that before Jehovah allowed his people to call themselves publicly by his sacred name, he saw to it that they met the requirements for that grand privilege. How did Jehovah prepare those early Bible Students to become bearers of his name?

⁸ In looking back at the late 1800's and early 1900's, we see how Jehovah gave his people a clearer understanding of important truths related to his name. Let us consider three of these truths.

⁹ First, Jehovah's servants came to have **the proper view of the importance of God's name**. Faithful early Bible Students viewed the ransom arrangement as the Bible's main teaching. That explains why the *Watch Tower* often focused on Jesus. For example, in its first year of publication, the magazine mentioned the name Jesus ten times more than the name Jehovah. Regarding the Bible Students' early years, *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1976, noted that they gave "overbalanced importance" to Jesus. In time, though, Jehovah helped them to discern the prominence that the Bible gives to God's personal name. How did that affect the Bible Students? Especially from 1919 onward, says the same *Watchtower* article, "they began showing more appreciation for Messiah's heavenly Father, Jehovah." In fact, during the decade following 1919, *The Watch Tower* mentioned God's name over 6,500 times!

¹⁰ By giving the name Jehovah proper recognition, our brothers showed their love for God's name. Like Moses of old, they set out to "declare the name of Jehovah." (Deut. 32:3; Ps. 34:3) In turn, as promised in the Scriptures, Jehovah took note of their love for his name and showed them favor.—Ps. 119:132; Heb. 6:10.

¹¹ Second, true Christians acquired **the right understanding of the work assigned by God**. Shortly after 1919, the anointed brothers taking the lead were moved to examine the prophecy of Isaiah. Thereafter, the contents of our publications underwent a change in focus. Why did that adjustment prove to be "food at the proper time"?—Matt. 24:45.

¹² Before 1919, *The Watch Tower* had never discussed in any detail Isaiah's statement: "'You are my witnesses,'

יהוה

THE MEANING OF GOD'S NAME

THE name Jehovah comes from a Hebrew verb that means “to become.” Some scholars feel that in this instance the verb is used in its causative form. God’s name is thus understood by many to mean “He Causes to Become.” This definition well fits Jehovah’s role as the Creator. He caused the universe and intelligent beings to come into existence and continues to cause his will and purpose to become a reality.

How, then, should we understand Jehovah’s answer to Moses’ question recorded at Exodus 3:13, 14? Moses asked: “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your forefathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is his name?’ What should I say to them?” Jehovah answered: “I Will Become What I Choose to Become.”

Note that Moses was not asking Jehovah to reveal his name. Moses and the Israelites already knew God’s name well. Moses wanted Jehovah to reveal

something faith-strengthening about the kind of God he is, something that may also be reflected in the meaning of his name. Hence, by responding, “I Will Become What I Choose to Become,” Jehovah was revealing a thrilling aspect of his own nature: In each situation, he becomes whatever is necessary to fulfill his purpose. For example, for Moses and the Israelites, Jehovah became a Rescuer, a Lawgiver, a Provider—and much more. Thus, Jehovah himself *chooses to become* whatever is necessary to fulfill his promises to his people. However, while the name Jehovah may include this idea, it is not limited to what he himself chooses to become. It also includes what he causes his creation to become in the accomplishment of his purpose.^[1]

FOOTNOTE

[1] See appendix A4 in the revised *New World Translation*.

declares Jehovah, ‘yes, my servant whom I have chosen.’” (**Read Isaiah 43:10-12.**) But soon after 1919, our publications began to pay attention to that Bible passage, encouraging all anointed ones to share in the work Jehovah had assigned to them—that of *witnessing* about him. In fact, from 1925 to 1931 alone, Isaiah chapter 43 was considered in 57 different issues of *The Watch Tower*; and each issue applied Isaiah’s words to true Christians. Clearly, during those years, Jehovah was drawing the attention of his servants to the *work* they had to do. Why so? In a way, so that they could be “tested as to fitness first.” (1 Tim. 3:10) Before they could rightly bear God’s name, the Bible Students had to prove to Jehovah by their works that they truly were his witnesses.—Luke 24:47, 48.

13 Third, Jehovah’s people came to appreciate **the importance of the sanctification of God’s name**. During the 1920’s, they discerned that the sanctification of God’s name is the most important issue to be settled. How does God’s Word reveal that weighty truth? Consider two examples. What was the principal reason why God rescued Israel from Egypt? Jehovah stated: “To have my name declared in all the earth.” (Ex. 9:16) And why did Jehovah show mercy to Israel when they rebelled against him? Again, Jehovah said: “I acted for the sake of my name so that it would not be profaned before the nations.” (Ezek. 20:8-10) What did the Bible Students learn from those and other Bible accounts?

14 By the late 1920’s, God’s people discerned the significance of what Isaiah had stated some 2,700 years earlier. Regarding Jehovah he said: “This is how you led your people, *to make a majestic name for yourself*.” (Isa. 63:14) The Bible Students understood that the primary issue was, not personal salvation, but the sanctifying of God’s name. (Isa. 37:20; Ezek. 38:23) In 1929, the book *Prophecy* summed up that truth, stating: “Jehovah’s name is the most vital issue before all creation.” This adjusted understanding further motivated God’s servants to witness about Jehovah and to clear his name of slander.

15 By the dawn of the 1930’s, our brothers had acquired a proper view of the importance of God’s name, a clearer understanding of the work God had assigned them to do, and a deeper insight into the main issue to be settled. Now, Jehovah’s time had come to give his servants the honor of publicly bearing his name. To see how that came about, let us consider some past events.

13. How does God’s Word reveal the most important issue to be settled?

14. (a) By the late 1920’s, what did God’s people discern? (b) What effect did the deeper understanding acquired by the Bible Students have on the preaching work? (See also the box “A Powerful Reason to Preach.”)

15. (a) By the 1930’s, what had our brothers acquired? (b) What time had come?



Convention program, 1931

16. (a) In what outstanding way does Jehovah exalt his name? (b) In the past, who first served as a people for God's name?

Jehovah Takes "a People for His Name"

¹⁶ An outstanding way in which Jehovah exalts his name is by having a people on earth who bear his name. From 1513 B.C.E. onward, the nation of Israel represented Jehovah as his people. (Isa. 43:12) However, they failed to keep their part of the covenant with God, and in 33 C.E., they lost their special relationship with him. Shortly thereafter, Jehovah "turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) That newly chosen people became known as "the Israel of God," which consists of anointed followers of Christ from various nations.—Gal. 6:16.

A POWERFUL REASON TO PREACH

HOW did having a clearer understanding of the issue involving the sanctification of God's name affect the Bible Students' view of the preaching work? In 1930, *The Watch Tower* stated: "When this truth [about the sanctification of God's name] becomes thoroughly entrenched in the mind of the Christian he begins to realize what a marvelous privilege is his to be a witness to the word and name of Jehovah God." Indeed, understanding that the sanctification of God's name was the main issue gave our brothers and sisters a powerful reason to preach. (Ps. 8:1) Take Helen Borchert as an example. She started pioneering on April 1, 1930, and remained a faithful Witness until she finished her earthly course in July 2003 at the age of 96. What moved her to keep on preaching for decades? Many years later she said: "From that day until this moment, my most urgent desire has been . . . to clear from slander the name and Word of Jehovah God." For us today, having a share in sanctifying God's name is still a powerful reason to preach.



Helen Borchert

¹⁷ In about 44 C.E., Christ's disciples were "by divine providence called Christians." (Acts 11:26) Initially, that name was distinctive, for it referred to true Christians only. (1 Pet. 4:16) However, as indicated in Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds, Satan succeeded in his scheme to apply the unique name Christian to all kinds of imitation Christians. Consequently, for many centuries, true Christians did not stand out clearly from imitation Christians. But that started to change during "the harvest season," which began in 1914. Why? Because angels began separating imitation Christians from genuine ones.—Matt. 13:30, 39-41.

¹⁸ After the appointment of the faithful slave in 1919, Jehovah helped his people to discern the work he had assigned them to do. They quickly saw that preaching from house to house set them apart from all imitation Christians. Once they realized that fact, it was not long before they understood that the designation "Bible Students" was not distinctive enough. Their prime purpose in life was not simply to study the Bible but to witness about God and to honor and exalt his name. So, what name would be fitting for the work they were doing? That question was answered in 1931.

¹⁹ In July 1931, some 15,000 Bible Students arrived in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., for a convention. Seeing the convention program, they were intrigued by the two large letters *J* and *W* printed on its front cover. 'What do those letters mean?' they wondered. Some thought they meant, 'Just Watch'; others, 'Just Wait.' Then, on Sunday, July 26, Brother Joseph Rutherford presented a resolution containing the powerful statement: "We desire to be known as and called by the name, to wit, *Jehovah's witnesses*." At that moment, all in attendance understood the meaning of those puzzling letters—they stood for Jehovah's Witnesses, a Scriptural name based on Isaiah 43:10.

²⁰ The audience responded to that resolution with a tremendous shout and long applause. By radio, that enthusiastic reaction in Columbus was heard halfway around the globe! Ernest and Naomi Barber in Australia recalled: "When the applause went up in America, the brothers in Melbourne jumped to their feet and kept on applauding. We will never forget it!"^[2]

God's Name Is Being Exalted Worldwide

²¹ Having the Scriptural name Jehovah's Witnesses gave God's servants added strength to share in the preaching

17. What scheme did Satan succeed in carrying out?

18. What helped our brothers to see that a new name was needed?

19, 20. (a) What exciting resolution was made at a convention in 1931?

(b) How did our brothers react to the adoption of the new name?

21. How did the new name stimulate the preaching work?

"We left home as Bible Students, but we returned as Jehovah's Witnesses"

FOOTNOTE

[2] See Chapter 7, pages 72-74, for details about that use of the radio.

22. What proves that Jehovah's people have a distinct identity?

23. According to Psalm 121:5, what important truth about Jehovah gives us much strength?

work. Edward and Jessie Grimes, a pioneer couple in the United States who attended the 1931 convention in Columbus, observed: "We left home as Bible Students, but we returned as Jehovah's Witnesses. We were happy that we now had a name that helped us to magnify the name of our God." After that convention, some Witnesses used a new method to do just that. They introduced themselves to householders by handing them a card with the message: "One of JEHOVAH'S witnesses preaching the Kingdom of JEHOVAH our God." Yes, God's people were proud to bear the name Jehovah, and they were ready to proclaim its significance far and wide.—Isa. 12:4.

²² Many years have passed since Jehovah moved our anointed brothers to embrace their distinctive name. During the intervening years, has Satan been able to obscure the identity of God's people? Has he succeeded in absorbing us into the world's religious landscape? No, indeed! On the contrary, our distinct identity as witnesses of God stands out more than ever. **(Read Micah 4:5; Malachi 3:18.)** In fact, we have become so closely associated with God's name that anyone who freely uses it today is quickly identified as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Instead of being obscured by a range of mountainlike false religions, Jehovah's true worship is "firmly established *above* the top of the mountains." (Isa. 2:2) Today, Jehovah's worship and his sacred name are, indeed, highly exalted.

²³ How strengthening it is to know that Jehovah will shield us against Satan's present and future attacks! (Ps. 121:5) With good reason we echo the sentiments of the psalmist who wrote: "Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people he has chosen as his own possession." —Ps. 33:12.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What has the Kingdom accomplished regarding God's name?
- How do you personally share in sanctifying God's name?
- Why are you proud to bear God's personal name and eager to tell others about its significance?

The King Shines Light on the Kingdom

5

IMAGINE that an experienced guide is leading you on a tour of a wondrous and beautiful city. The city is new to you and to those with you, so you hang on to the guide's every word. At times, you and your fellow tourists wonder excitedly about some of the city's features that you have not yet seen. When you ask your guide about such things, however, he withholds his comments until key moments, often just when a certain sight is coming into view. In time, you grow ever more impressed with his wisdom, for he tells you what you need to know right when you need to know it.

² True Christians are in a situation similar to that of the tourists. We are eagerly learning about the most wondrous of cities, "the city having real foundations," the Kingdom of God. (Heb. 11:10) When Jesus was on earth, he personally guided his followers, leading them to a deeper knowledge of that Kingdom. Did he answer all their questions and tell them everything about that Kingdom at once? No. He said: "I still have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now." (John 16:12) As the wisest of guides, Jesus never burdened his disciples with knowledge that they were not prepared to handle.

³ Jesus spoke the words recorded at John 16:12 on the final night of his earthly life. After his death, how would he continue to teach faithful people about God's Kingdom? He assured his apostles: "The spirit of the truth . . . will guide you into all the truth."^[1] (John 16:13) We may think of the holy spirit as a patient guide. The spirit is Jesus' means of teaching his followers whatever they need to know about God's Kingdom—right when they need to know it.

⁴ Let us consider how Jehovah's holy spirit has been guiding sincere Christians into greater knowledge about that Kingdom. First, we will consider our understanding of when God's Kingdom began to rule. Then, we will examine

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

God's people come to recognize vital truths about the Kingdom, its rulers, and its subjects, as well as the requirement of loyalty

1, 2. In what sense did Jesus prove to be a wise guide?

3, 4. (a) How has Jesus continued to teach faithful people about God's Kingdom? (b) What will we consider in this chapter?

FOOTNOTE

[1] According to one reference work, the Greek word for "guide" in that verse means "to show the road."

5, 6. (a) The Bible Students held what mistaken views about the establishment of the Kingdom and the harvest? (b) Why should such mistaken views not cast doubt on whether Jesus was guiding his followers?

7. God's people were blessed with what flashes of spiritual light?

8, 9. (a) How did the importance of God's Kingdom come to the fore? (b) What questions will we consider?

the identity and hopes of the Kingdom's rulers and its subjects. Finally, we will see how Christ's followers gained a clearer understanding of what loyalty to the Kingdom requires.

Understanding a Pivotal Year

⁵ As we saw in Chapter 2 of this book, the Bible Students spent decades pointing out that the year 1914 would be significant in fulfilling Bible prophecy. However, at that time they believed that Christ's presence had begun in 1874, that he had begun to rule in heaven in 1878, and that the Kingdom would not be fully set up until October 1914. The harvest would extend from 1874 to 1914 and would culminate in the gathering of the anointed to heaven. Do mistaken ideas such as these cast doubt on whether Jesus was guiding those faithful ones by means of holy spirit?

⁶ Not at all! Think again of our opening illustration. Would the premature ideas and eager questions of the tourists cast doubt on the reliability of their guide? Hardly! Similarly, although God's people sometimes try to work out details of Jehovah's purpose before it is time for the holy spirit to guide them to such truths, it is clear that Jesus is leading them. Thus, faithful ones prove willing to be corrected and humbly adjust their views.—Jas. 4:6.

⁷ In the years following 1919, God's people were blessed with more and more flashes of spiritual light. **(Read Psalm 97:11.)** In 1925, a landmark article appeared in *The Watch Tower*, entitled "Birth of the Nation." It laid out convincing Scriptural evidence that the Messianic Kingdom had been born in 1914, fulfilling the prophetic picture of God's heavenly woman giving birth, as recorded in Revelation chapter 12.^[2] The article further showed that the persecution and trouble that came upon Jehovah's people during those war years were clear signs that Satan had been hurled down from heaven, "having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time."—Rev. 12:12.

⁸ How important is the Kingdom? In 1928, *The Watch Tower* began to stress that the Kingdom was more important than personal salvation by means of the ransom. Indeed, it is by means of the Messianic Kingdom that Jehovah will sanctify his name, vindicate his sovereignty, and carry out all his purposes regarding mankind.

⁹ Who would rule with Christ in that Kingdom? Who would be the earthly subjects of that Kingdom? And what work should occupy Christ's followers?

FOOTNOTE

[2] Before then, it was thought that the vision pointed to a war between pagan Rome and papal Rome.

The Harvest Work Focuses on the Anointed

¹⁰ Decades before 1914, true Christians already understood that 144,000 faithful followers of Christ would rule with him in heaven.^[3] Those Bible Students saw that the number was literal and that it began to be filled back in the first century C.E.

¹¹ What, though, were those prospective members of Christ's bride assigned to do while they were yet on the earth? They saw that Jesus had emphasized the preaching work and had connected it to a period of harvest. (Matt. 9: 37; John 4:35) As we noted in Chapter 2, for a time they held that the harvest period would last 40 years, climaxing with the gathering of the anointed to heaven. However, because the work continued after 40 years elapsed, more clarification was needed. Now we know that the harvest season—the season for separating wheat from weeds, faithful anointed Christians from imitation Christians—began in 1914. The time had come to focus attention on the gathering of the remaining number of that heavenly class!

¹² From 1919 onward, Christ kept guiding the faithful and discreet slave to emphasize the preaching work. He had made that assignment in the first century. (Matt. 28:19, 20) He also indicated what qualities his anointed followers would need in order to fulfill that preaching commission. How so? In his illustration of the ten virgins, he showed that the anointed would have to remain watchful, spiritually alert, if they were to reach their ultimate goal of sharing in the great wedding feast in heaven, when Christ would be united with his "bride" of 144,000. (Rev. 21:2) Then, in his illustration of the talents, Jesus taught that his anointed servants would be diligent in carrying out the preaching work he had entrusted to them.—Matt. 25:1-30.

10. What have God's people long understood about the 144,000?

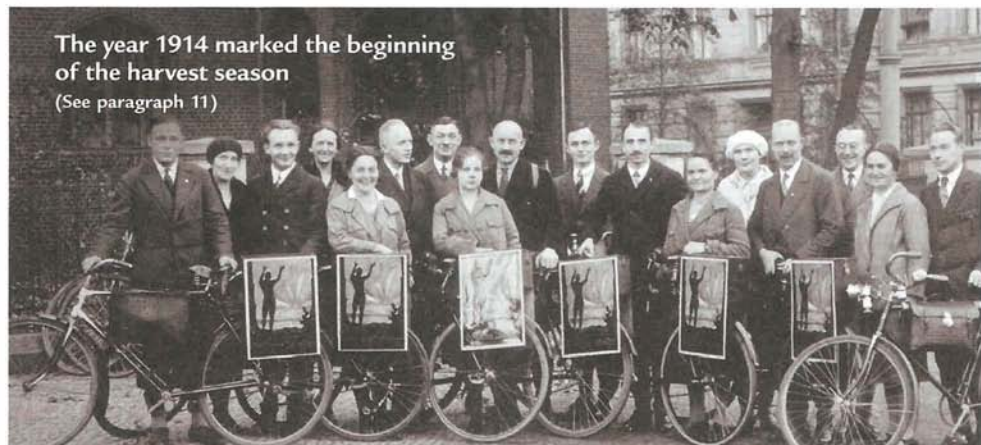
11. How did prospective members of Christ's bride progress in knowledge about their earthly assignment?

12, 13. How have Jesus' illustrations of the ten virgins and of the talents been fulfilled in the last days?

FOOTNOTE

[3] In June 1880, *Zion's Watch Tower* suggested that the 144,000 would be fleshly Jews converted by 1914. However, later in 1880, an understanding was published that more closely corresponds to the one we have held consistently since then.

The year 1914 marked the beginning of the harvest season
(See paragraph 11)



14, 15. What four different groups were discussed in *The Finished Mystery*?

16. What flashes of spiritual light came in 1923 and in 1932?

17. (a) In 1935, what brilliant flash of spiritual light came? (b) How were faithful Christians affected by the new understanding of the great multitude? (See the box "A Great Sigh of Relief.")

¹³ The anointed have proved to be both vigilant and diligent during this past century. Without fail, their watchfulness will be rewarded! However, would the great harvest work be limited to gathering the rest of Christ's 144,000 corulers?

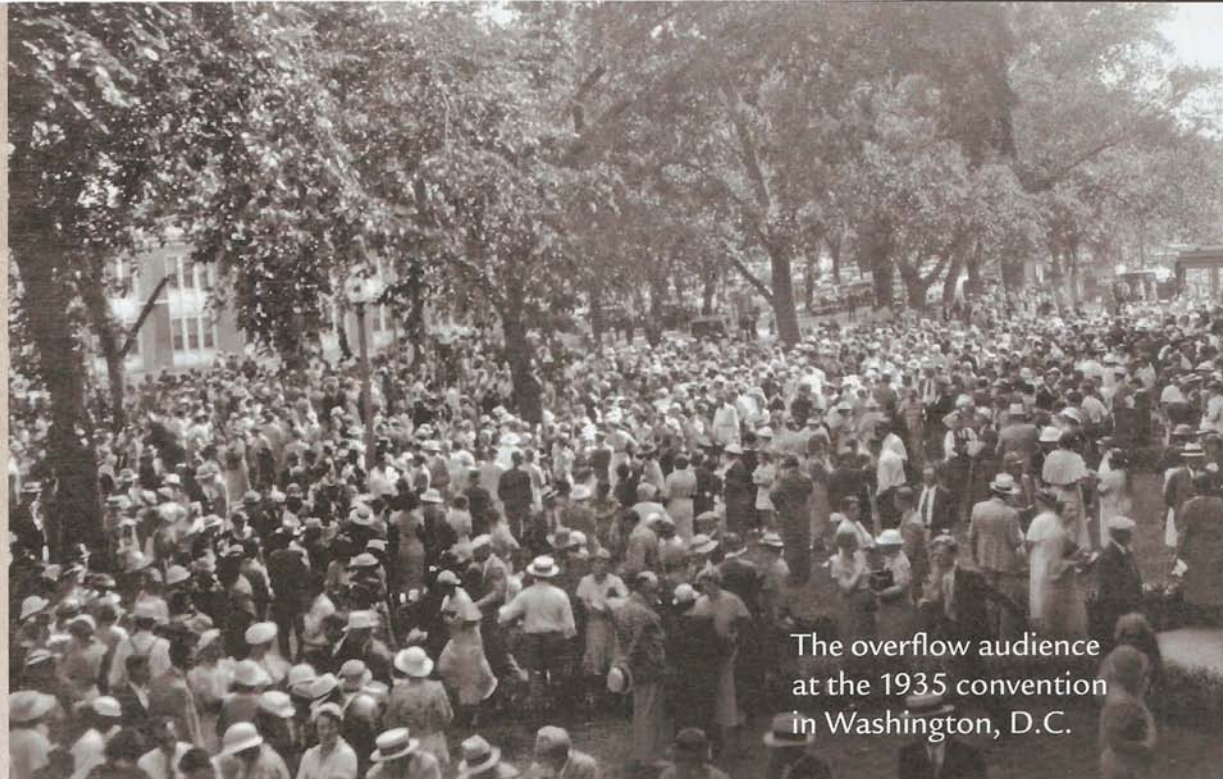
The Kingdom Gathers Its Earthly Subjects!

¹⁴ Faithful men and women have long been intensely curious about the "great crowd" ("great multitude," *King James Version*) mentioned at Revelation 7:9-14. Not surprisingly, before it was Christ's time to reveal the identity of this large group, much that was said on the subject veered wide of the clear, simple truths we know and love today.

¹⁵ In 1917, the book *The Finished Mystery* asserted that there are "two degrees or kinds of Heavenly salvation, and two degrees or kinds of earthly salvation." Who made up the four groups of people with those different hopes for salvation? First, there were the 144,000, who would rule with Christ. Second, there was the great multitude. Back then, the idea was that these were nominal Christians who were still in the churches of Christendom. They had a measure of faith but not enough to take a firm stand of integrity. Therefore, they would be given lesser positions in heaven. As to the earth, it was thought that a third group, the "ancient worthies"—such faithful ones as Abraham, Moses, and others—would have positions of authority over the fourth group, the world of mankind.

¹⁶ How did holy spirit guide Christ's followers to the understanding that we cherish today? It happened progressively, through a series of flashes of spiritual light. As early as 1923, *The Watch Tower* drew attention to a group with no heavenly aspirations who would live on earth under Christ's reign. In 1932, *The Watchtower* discussed Jonadab (Jehonadab), who attached himself to God's anointed Israelite King Jehu to support him in the war against false worship. (2 Ki. 10:15-17) The article said that there was a class of people in modern times who were like Jonadab, adding that Jehovah would take this class "through the Armageddon trouble" to live here on the earth.

¹⁷ In 1935 came a brilliant flash of spiritual light. At the convention held in Washington, D.C., the great multitude was identified as an earthly class, the same as the sheep in Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats. (Matt. 25:33-40) The great multitude would be among the "other sheep," of whom Jesus said: "Those too I must bring in." (John 10:16)



The overflow audience
at the 1935 convention
in Washington, D.C.

“A GREAT SIGH OF RELIEF”

THE discourse on the great multitude that was delivered on May 31, 1935, at the convention in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., had a profound effect on God's people. Consider some reactions from those who were present.

■ “Prior to 1935, there was often much discussion among the brothers as to whether one was of the anointed. I recall very well the day Brother Rutherford spoke on the subject ‘The Great Multitude.’ I had been helping to wash dishes in the cafeteria, and when it was time for the talk, I went up to the balcony and took a seat alone. After covering the matter quite thoroughly, Brother Rutherford asked all who believed they were part of the great multitude to stand. I immediately stood up and then looked around, and it seemed that most of those present were also standing. From that day forward, there has never been a question

in my mind as to whether I was of the anointed. . . . I am happy to be among those of the other sheep.”—Henry A. Cantwell.

■ “It was so heartening to many, for I used to hear from brothers that they were not sure they were of the anointed. Yet, they did not want to think of themselves as being among a ‘less faithful class,’ as the great multitude was thought to be. A great sigh of relief was voiced by many, and as this new truth sank in, a new sense of zeal took hold of those who now understood where they stood before Jehovah.”—Herman L. Philbrick.

■ “This assembly gave us much to rejoice over. We could freely offer people a hope of everlasting life on earth. Many who had partaken of the Memorial [emblems] could see where they stood and no longer [partook].”—John C. Booth.

18. How have Christ's followers focused their efforts in the ministry, and with what result?

19. How can we have a part in enlarging the great crowd?

20. Satan's organization is composed of what elements, and how is Christian loyalty involved?

21. (a) How has the faithful slave warned God's people about big business?
(b) In 1963, what did *The Watchtower* reveal about "Babylon the Great"?

When the speaker, J. F. Rutherford, asked: "Will all those who have the hope of living forever on the earth please stand?" more than half the audience rose to their feet! "Behold!" he declared. "The great multitude!" Many were deeply moved to understand at last their hope for the future.

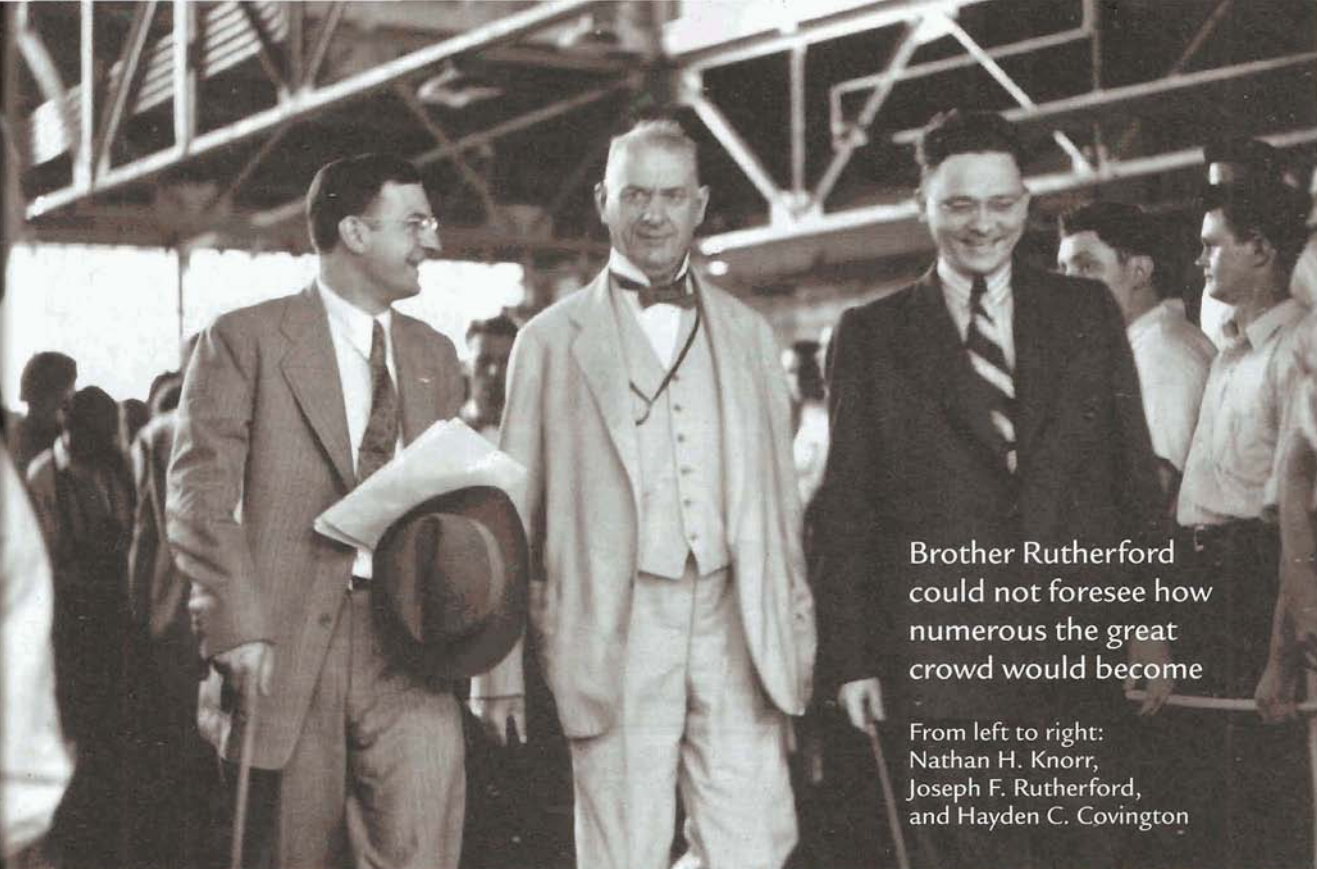
¹⁸ Ever since then, Christ has guided his people to focus their efforts on gathering the prospective members of this great crowd that will emerge, alive and safe, from the great tribulation. At first, the ingathering did not seem impressive. Brother Rutherford once even commented: "It looks as if the 'great multitude' is not going to be so great after all." Of course, we now know how greatly Jehovah has blessed the harvest since then! Under the guidance of Jesus and the holy spirit, both the anointed and their companions of the "other sheep" have become just what Jesus foretold—"one flock" serving together under "one shepherd."

¹⁹ The vast majority of faithful people will live forever in an earthly paradise, governed by Christ and his 144,000 corulers. Is it not a pleasure to contemplate the way Christ has guided God's people to such a clear Scriptural hope for the future? What a privilege we have to share that hope with those we meet in the ministry! Let us be as active as our circumstances will allow so that the great crowd will continue to swell in numbers, raising an ever greater shout of praise to Jehovah's name!—**Read Luke 10:2.**

What Loyalty to the Kingdom Requires

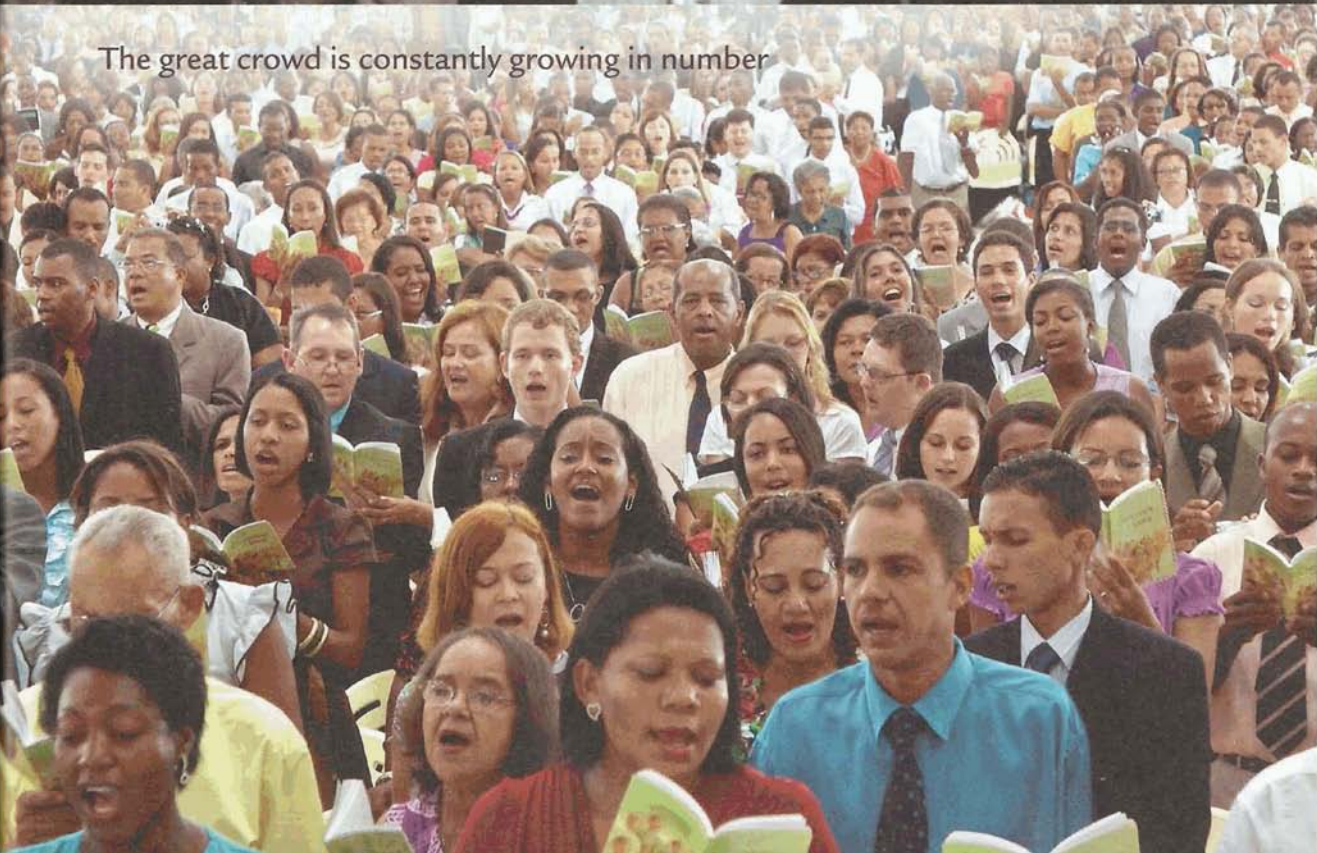
²⁰ As God's people continued to learn about the Kingdom, they also needed to grasp fully what it means to be loyal to that heavenly government. In this regard, in 1922, *The Watch Tower* pointed out that there are two organizations at work, Jehovah's and Satan's, with Satan's being made up of commercial, religious, and political elements. Those who are loyal to God's Kingdom under Christ must not compromise their loyalty through improper involvement with any aspect of Satan's organization. (2 Cor. 6:17) What does that mean?

²¹ The spiritual food from the faithful slave has consistently exposed the corruption of big business and has warned God's people not to give in to its rampant materialism. (Matt. 6:24) Likewise, our publications have kept the spotlight focused on the religious part of Satan's organization. In 1963, *The Watchtower* clearly showed that "Babylon the Great" represented not only Christendom but also the whole world empire of false religion. Thus, as we will see




Brother Rutherford
could not foresee how
numerous the great
crowd would become

From left to right:
Nathan H. Knorr,
Joseph F. Rutherford,
and Hayden C. Covington



The great crowd is constantly growing in number



What a privilege
it is to share the
Bible's hope of
everlasting life!

22. During World War I, how did many of God's people understand the exhortation of Romans 13:1?

23, 24. What was our understanding of Romans 13:1 during World War II, and to what more accurate view were Christ's followers guided?

more fully in Chapter 10 of this book, God's people in every land and culture have been helped to "get out of her," cleansing themselves of all false religious practices.—Rev. 18:2, 4.

²² What, though, about the political part of Satan's organization? Could true Christians take part in the wars and conflicts of the nations? During World War I, the Bible Students generally understood that Christ's followers should have no share in killing their fellow humans. (Matt. 26:52) However, for many, the exhortation found at Romans 13:1 to be obedient to "the superior authorities" meant that they should join the army, wear soldiers' uniforms, and even bear arms; however, when asked to kill the enemy, they should shoot into the air.

²³ Just as World War II was erupting in 1939, *The Watchtower* featured an in-depth discussion of neutrality. The article showed clearly that Christians would have no part at all in the wars and conflicts of the nations of Satan's world. What timely guidance! Christ's followers were thus protected from the horrific bloodguilt that clung to the nations in that war. Beginning in 1929, however, our publications had also reasoned that the superior authorities of Romans 13:1 were not the secular rulers at all, but Jehovah and Jesus. A more accurate understanding was still needed.


²⁴ The holy spirit guided Christ's followers to just such a view in 1962, when landmark articles on Romans 13:1-7 were published in the November 15 and December 1 issues of *The Watchtower*. Finally, God's people grasped the principle of relative subjection that Jesus had revealed in his famous words: "Pay back Caesar's things to Caesar but God's things to God." (Luke 20:25) True Christians now understand that the superior authorities are the secular powers of this world and that Christians must be subject to them. However, such subjection is relative. When the secular authorities ask us to disobey Jehovah God, then we answer as did the apostles of old: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) In Chapters 13 and 14 of this book, we will learn more about how God's people have put the principle of Christian neutrality into action.

²⁵ Think of all that Christ's followers have been taught about the Kingdom over this past century. We have learned when God's Kingdom was established in heaven and how important it is. We have a clear picture of the two hopes offered to faithful people, the heavenly hope and the earthly hope. And we know how to demonstrate our loyalty to God's Kingdom while being in relative subjection to worldly authorities. Ask yourself, 'Would I know any of those precious truths if Jesus Christ had not guided his faithful slave on earth to grasp them and then to teach them?' What a blessing to have Christ and the holy spirit guiding us!

25. Why do you appreciate the guidance of the holy spirit in understanding God's Kingdom?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How have true Christians come to understand the truth about the year 1914 and the importance of God's Kingdom?
- What moves you to help others become earthly subjects of the Kingdom?
- What balanced view do we now have regarding loyalty to the Kingdom and subjection to the superior authorities?
- What convinces you that Christ has been using holy spirit to guide his people in their understanding of God's Kingdom?



Left:
A colporteur sister
preaching in Korea,
1931

Right:
Preaching in
sign language
in Korea today

SECTION 2

KINGDOM PREACHING

Spreading the Good News
Worldwide



YOU prepare for the ministry early on your day off from secular work. You hesitate for a moment, feeling a bit tired. A morning of rest seems so appealing! But you pray about it and resolve to go. You work with a faithful elderly sister, and her endurance and kindness touch your heart. And as you share the message of the truth from house to house, it occurs to you that your brothers and sisters around the world are sharing this same message, using the same literature, all benefiting from the same training. By the time you get home, you

feel energized. You are so glad you did not stay home!

At present, the Christian ministry is the chief work of God's Kingdom. Jesus foretold that the preaching work would have an astounding scope during the last days. (Matt. 24:14) How has his prophecy been fulfilled? In this section, we will examine the people, the methods, and the tools that have been so important to the Christian ministry, which is helping millions the world over to see God's Kingdom as real.

6

People Who Preach Ministers Offer Themselves Willingly

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

The King raises up an army of preachers

- 1, 2. What great work did Jesus foretell, and what important question arises?
3. What confidence did Jesus express, and where did he get such confidence?
4. What work did Jehovah invite the Israelites to support, and how did they respond?

POLITICAL RULERS often make promises that go unfulfilled. Even those with the best of intentions may be unable to carry out their promises. In refreshing contrast, the Messianic King, Jesus Christ, always proves true to his word.

² After he became King in 1914, Jesus was ready to fulfill a prophecy he had made some 1,900 years earlier. Shortly before he died, Jesus foretold: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth.” (Matt. 24:14) The fulfillment of those words would be part of the sign of his presence in Kingdom power. However, an important question arises: How would the King be able to raise up an army of willing preachers in the last days—a time period that would be marked by a selfish, loveless, and irreligious spirit? (Matt. 24:12; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) We need to know, for the answer to that question involves all true Christians.

³ Look again at Jesus’ prophetic words. Do the words “*will be preached*” express confidence? Indeed, they do! Jesus was sure that he would have willing supporters in the last days. Where did he get such confidence? He learned it from his Father. (John 12:45; 14:9) In his prehuman existence, Jesus observed firsthand that Jehovah has confidence in the willing spirit of His worshippers. Let us see how Jehovah expressed that confidence.

“Your People Will Offer Themselves Willingly”

⁴ Recall what happened when Jehovah directed Moses to construct the tabernacle, or tent, that was to be the center of worship for the nation of Israel. Jehovah, through Moses, invited all the people to support the work. Moses told them: “Let everyone with a willing heart bring a contribution for Jehovah.” The result? The people “continued to bring . . . voluntary offerings, morning after morning.”

They brought so much that they had to be “restrained from bringing in anything else”! (Ex. 35:5; 36:3, 6) The Israelites lived up to the confidence that Jehovah had placed in them.

⁵ Did Jehovah expect to find such a willing spirit among his worshippers in the last days? Yes! More than 1,000 years before Jesus was born on earth, Jehovah inspired David to write about the time when the Messiah would begin to rule. (**Read Psalm 110:1-3.**) Jesus, the newly installed King, would have enemies who would oppose him. Yet, he would also have an army of supporters. They would not have to be forced into serving the King. Even the young among them would offer themselves freely, becoming a multitude so great that they could aptly be compared to the countless dewdrops that blanket the ground in the morning sun.^[1]

⁶ Jesus knew that the prophecy recorded in Psalm 110 applied to him. (Matt. 22:42-45) Hence, he had every reason to be confident that he would have loyal supporters who would offer themselves willingly to preach the good news in all the earth. What do the historical facts show? Has the King, in fact, raised up an army of willing preachers in these last days?

“My Privilege and Duty Is to Announce That Message”

⁷ Shortly after he was installed as King, Jesus took steps to prepare his followers for the vast work to be done. As we saw in Chapter 2, he did an inspection and a cleansing work from 1914 to early 1919. (Mal. 3:1-4) Then, in 1919, he appointed the faithful slave to take the lead among his followers. (Matt. 24:45) Especially from that time onward,

5, 6. According to Psalm 110:1-3, what spirit did Jehovah and thus Jesus expect to find among true worshippers in the time of the end?

7. After he was installed as King, what steps did Jesus take to prepare his supporters for the work ahead?

FOOTNOTE

[1] In the Bible, dew is associated with abundance.—Gen. 27:28; Mic. 5:7.

Willing Kingdom supporters
are as numerous as dewdrops
(See paragraph 5)



8-10. How did conventions give impetus to the preaching work? Give an example. (See also the box “Early Conventions That Gave Impetus to the Preaching Work.”)

11, 12. What did *The Watch Tower* in 1920 say as to when the work that Jesus foretold would be done?

that slave began dispensing spiritual food—by means of convention discourses and printed publications—that repeatedly emphasized the responsibility of all Christians to have a *personal* share in preaching.

8 Convention discourses. Eager for direction, the Bible Students gathered at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., from September 1 to 8, 1919, for their first major convention following World War I. On the second day, Brother Rutherford gave a discourse in which he pointedly told the delegates: “A Christian’s mission on earth . . . is to proclaim the message of the Lord’s kingdom.”

9 The climax of that convention came three days later when Brother Rutherford delivered the talk entitled “Address to Co-laborers,” which was published in *The Watch Tower* under the title “Announcing the Kingdom.” He stated: “In sober moments a Christian naturally asks himself, Why am I on the earth? And the answer of necessity must be, The Lord has graciously made me his ambassador to bear the divine message of reconciliation to the world, and my privilege and duty is to announce that message.”

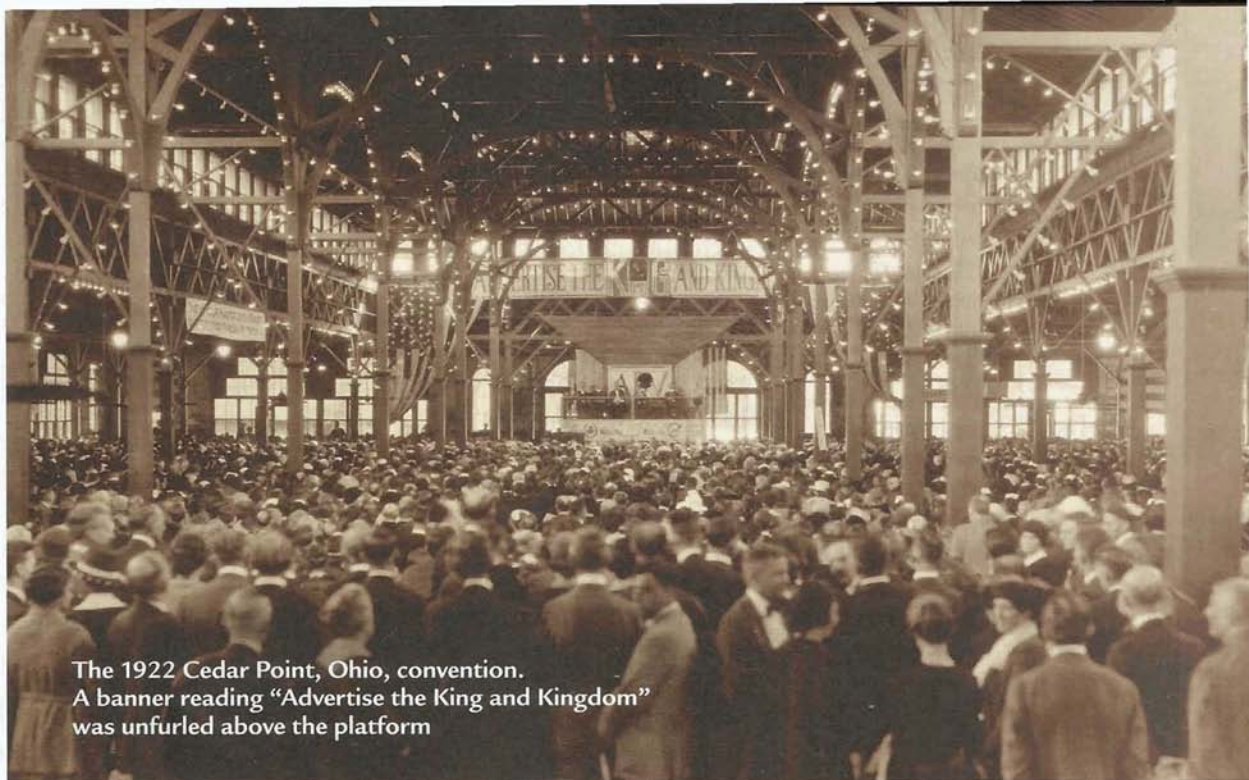
10 In that historic discourse, Brother Rutherford announced that a new magazine, *The Golden Age* (now called *Awake!*), would be published for use in directing people to the Kingdom as mankind’s only hope. He then asked how many of those in the audience wanted to have a share in distributing this journal. A report on the convention explained: “The response was an inspiring scene. Six thousand people, as one person, arose.”^[2] Clearly, the King had willing supporters who were eager to proclaim his Kingdom!

11 Printed publications. Through the pages of *The Watch Tower*, the significance of the work Jesus foretold—namely, the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom—became clearer and clearer. Consider some examples from the early 1920’s.

12 What message would be proclaimed in fulfillment of Matthew 24:14? When would that work be done? The July 1, 1920, issue of *The Watch Tower*, in the article entitled “Gospel of the Kingdom,” explained the message, stating: “The good news here is concerning the end of the old order of things and the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom.” The article clearly showed when this message would be preached, saying: “This message must be delivered between the time of the great world war [World War I] and the time of the ‘great tribulation.’” Hence, the article noted: “Now

FOOTNOTE

[2] The pamphlet *To Whom the Work Is Entrusted* explained: “*The Golden Age* work is a house-to-house canvass with the kingdom message. . . . In addition to the canvass, a copy of *The Golden Age* is to be left at each home, whether a subscription is taken or not.” For years thereafter, the brothers were encouraged to offer people subscriptions to *The Golden Age* as well as to *The Watch Tower*. Beginning February 1, 1940, Jehovah’s people were encouraged to distribute individual copies of the magazines and to report the number placed.



The 1922 Cedar Point, Ohio, convention. A banner reading “Advertise the King and Kingdom” was unfurled above the platform

EARLY CONVENTIONS THAT GAVE IMPETUS TO THE PREACHING WORK

■ 1919, Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A.

The program highlighted that a Christian’s vocation was “to announce the incoming glorious kingdom of Messiah.” An announcement was made that a new magazine, *The Golden Age*, would be published for use in directing people to the Kingdom. To organize and give impetus to the work, a service director would be appointed for each class, or congregation, of Bible Students.

■ **1922, Cedar Point, Ohio.** During the discourse entitled “The Kingdom,” the speaker urged: “Advertise, advertise, advertise the King and his Kingdom.” One of those present, Anna E. Zimmerman, later recalled: “Our mission was now loud and clear—to

advertise the King and the Kingdom, and we went forth from that convention and did just that.”

■ **1931, Columbus, Ohio.** The Bible Students adopted a new name—Jehovah’s Witnesses. That name clearly identified the responsibility of those who worship Jehovah, namely, to proclaim his name and Kingdom.

■ **1935, Washington, D.C.** The “great multitude,” or “great crowd,” was identified as consisting of individuals who have the prospect of living forever on earth. (Rev. 7:9-17; *King James Version*) With their understanding thus clarified, Jehovah’s people discerned that the scope of the preaching work before them was indeed great.

13. How did *The Watch Tower* in 1921 appeal to the willing spirit of anointed Christians?

14, 15. In 1922, *The Watch Tower* urged anointed Christians to reach others in what way?

16. How did some of the elected elders react to the idea that all should share in the ministry?

17, 18. How did most in the congregations respond to the direction from headquarters, and how have millions responded over the past 100 years?

is the time . . . to proclaim far and wide in Christendom this good news.”

13 Would God’s people be pressured into doing the work that Jesus foretold? No. The article “Be of Good Courage,” in the March 15, 1921, issue of *The Watch Tower*, appealed to the willing spirit of anointed Christians. Each one was encouraged to ask himself: “Is it not my greatest privilege, as well as my duty, to participate in this work?” The article went on to say: “We feel assured that when you do see it [as a privilege to share in the work] you will be like Jeremiah, in whose heart the word of the Lord was ‘as a burning fire shut up in [his] bones,’ urging him on so that he could not refrain from speaking.” (Jer. 20:9) That warm encouragement reflected the confidence that Jehovah and Jesus have in loyal Kingdom supporters.

14 How should true Christians reach others with the Kingdom message? The short but powerful article entitled “Service Essential,” in the August 15, 1922, issue of *The Watch Tower*, urged anointed Christians to take part in “actively carrying the printed message to the people and talking to them at their doors, giving the witness that the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

15 Clearly, from 1919 on, Christ has used his faithful and discreet slave to emphasize repeatedly that a Christian’s privilege and duty on earth is to proclaim the Kingdom message. How, though, did the early Bible Students respond to the encouragement to share in the work of Kingdom proclamation?

“The Faithful Will Be Volunteers”

16 In the 1920’s and 1930’s, some resisted the idea that *all* anointed Christians should share in the ministry. The November 1, 1927, *Watch Tower* explained what was happening: “There are those today in the church [congregation] occupying the responsible position of elder . . . who refuse to encourage their brethren to have part in the service, and who refuse to participate in the service themselves. . . . They scoff at the suggestion of going from door to door to carry the message of God, his King and his kingdom, to the people.” The article pointedly said: “The time has come for the faithful to mark such and to avoid them, and to say to them that no longer will we entrust such men with the office of eldership.” [3]

17 Happily, most in the congregations responded enthusiastically to the direction from headquarters. They count-

FOOTNOTE

[3] At that time, elders were elected democratically by the congregation. Therefore, a congregation could refuse to vote for men who were opposed to the ministry. The change to theocratic appointment of elders will be discussed in Chapter 12.

ed it a privilege to share the Kingdom message. *The Watch Tower* of March 15, 1926, put it this way: “The faithful will be volunteers . . . to tell this message to the people.” Such faithful ones lived up to the prophetic words found at Psalm 110:3 and proved themselves to be willing supporters of the Messianic King.

¹⁸ Over the past 100 years, millions have offered themselves willingly to carry out the work of Kingdom proclamation. In the next few chapters, we will discuss *how* they have preached—the methods and the tools they have used—and *what* the results have been. First, though, let us discuss *why* millions have shared in this Kingdom-preaching work voluntarily, despite living in a me-first world. As we consider why, we do well to ask ourselves, ‘Why do I share the good news with others?’

“Keep . . . Seeking First the Kingdom”

¹⁹ Jesus counseled his followers to “keep . . . seeking first the Kingdom.” (Matt. 6:33) Why do we heed that counsel? Basically, because we recognize the importance of the Kingdom, that it is central to God’s purpose. As we saw in the preceding chapter, the holy spirit has gradually revealed thrilling truths about the Kingdom. When precious Kingdom truth touches our heart, we feel impelled to seek first that Kingdom.

²⁰ Jesus knew how his followers would respond to the counsel to keep seeking first the Kingdom. Consider his illustration of the hidden treasure. (**Read Matthew 13:44.**) In the course of his daily work, the field laborer in the illustration happens to find a hidden treasure and immediately recognizes its value. What does he do? “Because of his joy, he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.” What is the lesson for us? When we find Kingdom truth and recognize its value, we will joyfully make whatever sacrifices are needed so that we may keep Kingdom interests where they belong—first in our life.^[4]

²¹ Loyal Kingdom supporters show by deeds, not mere words, that they are seeking first the Kingdom. They devote their lives, their abilities, and their resources to the Kingdom-preaching work. Many have made great sacrifices in order to pursue the full-time ministry. All such willing preachers have seen firsthand that Jehovah blesses those who put the Kingdom first. Consider an example from the early days.

19. Why do we heed Jesus’ counsel to “keep . . . seeking first the Kingdom”?

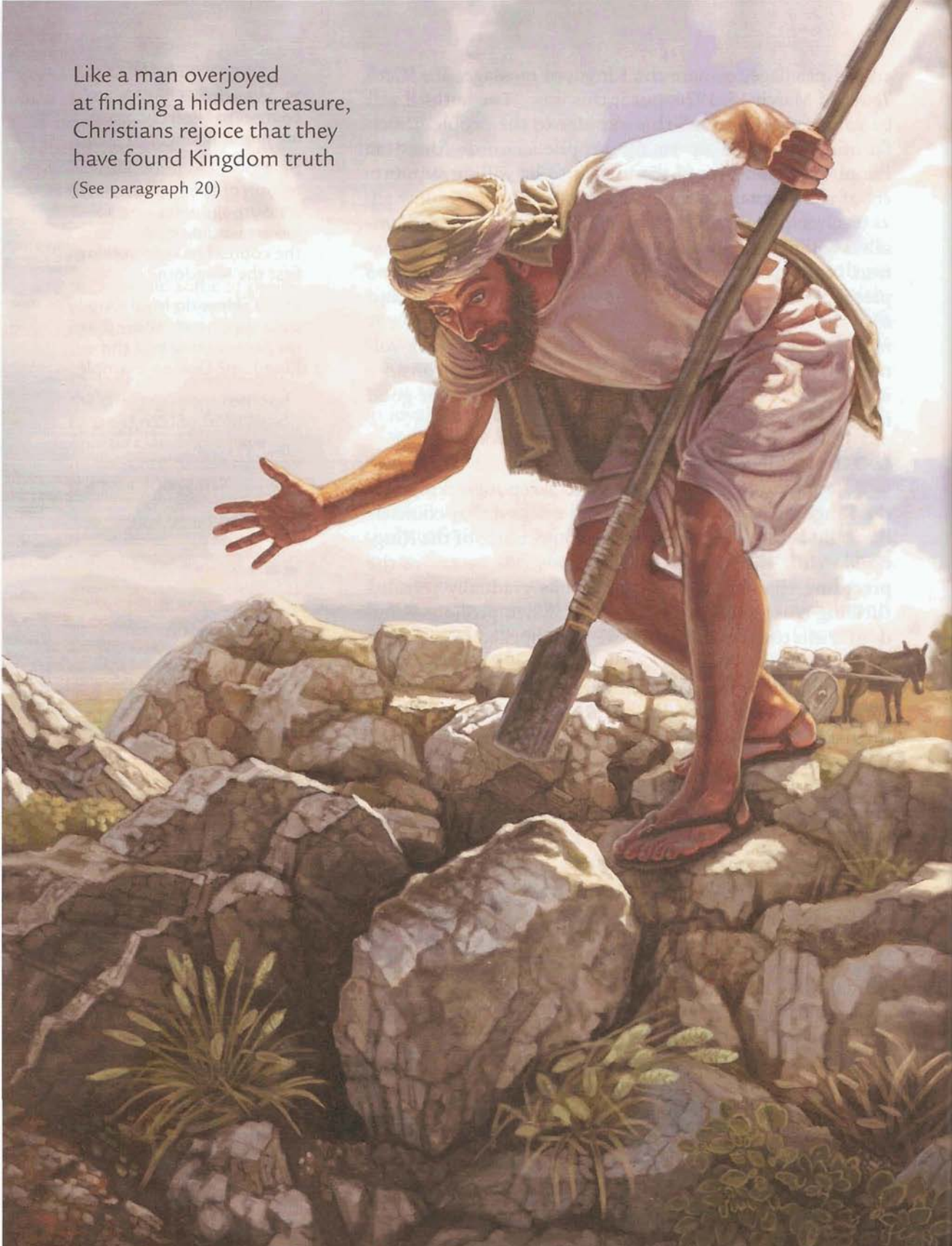
20. How does Jesus’ illustration of the hidden treasure show how his followers would respond to the counsel to keep seeking first the Kingdom?

21, 22. How do loyal Kingdom supporters show that they are seeking first the Kingdom? Give an example.

FOOTNOTE

[4] Jesus made a similar point in his illustration of a traveling merchant who goes out in search of a pearl of high value. When the merchant finds it, he sells everything he has and buys it. (Matt. 13:45, 46) The two parables also teach us that we may learn of Kingdom truth in different ways. Some stumble upon it, so to speak; others search for it. But no matter how we find the truth, we are willing to make sacrifices in order to put the Kingdom first in our life.

Like a man overjoyed
at finding a hidden treasure,
Christians rejoice that they
have found Kingdom truth
(See paragraph 20)



²² Avery and Lovenia Bristow served together as colporteurs (pioneers) in the southern United States starting in the late 1920's. Years later, Lovenia recalled: "Avery and I have had many happy years together in the pioneer work since then. There have been many times when we did not know where the money for gasoline or groceries would come from. But one way or another, Jehovah always provided. We just kept on keeping on. We always had what we actually needed." Lovenia remembered one occasion when they were serving in Pensacola, Florida, and were low on money and groceries. They came home to their trailer and found two large bags of groceries along with a note that read, "With love from the Pensacola Company."^[5] Reflecting on her decades in the full-time ministry, Lovenia said: "Jehovah never forsakes us. He never betrays the trust we put in him."

²³ We cannot all do the same amount of preaching. Our circumstances vary. However, all of us can count it a privilege to declare the good news whole-souled. (Col. 3:23) Because we prize the precious Kingdom truth we have found, we are willing—yes, eager—to make whatever sacrifices we can in order to serve to the fullest extent possible. Is that not your determination?

²⁴ Over the past century, the King has indeed been fulfilling his prophetic words recorded at Matthew 24:14. And he has done so without using coercion. After coming out of this self-centered world, his followers have willingly offered themselves to preach. Their earth-wide preaching of the good news is part of the sign of Jesus' presence in Kingdom power—and one of the Kingdom's greatest accomplishments in the last days.

23. How do you feel about the Kingdom truth that you have found, and what are you determined to do?

24. What is one of the Kingdom's greatest accomplishments in the last days?

FOOTNOTE

[5] Congregations were then called companies.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- Why was Jesus confident that he would have willing supporters in the last days?
- How has the faithful and discreet slave emphasized the responsibility of all to have a personal share in preaching?
- How do you feel about the Kingdom truth you have found, and how can you show that you are seeking first the Kingdom?

7

Methods of Preaching Using Every Means to Reach People

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

God's people use a variety of methods of preaching to reach the largest audience possible

1, 2. (a) What technique did Jesus use in order to speak to a large audience? (b) How have faithful disciples of Christ followed his example, and why?

3. How were enemies of the truth frustrated by our use of newspapers?

CROWDS gather around Jesus on the shore of a lake, but he boards a boat and pulls away a short distance. Why? He knows that the surface of the water will amplify his voice and that the large audience will be able to hear his message more clearly.—**Read Mark 4:1, 2.**

² In the decades surrounding the Kingdom's birth, faithful disciples of Christ followed his example, using novel techniques to spread the good news of the Kingdom to large audiences. Under the direction of the King, God's people continue to innovate and adapt as circumstances change and new technologies become available. We want to reach as many as possible before the end comes. (Matt. 24: 14) Consider just some of the methods we have used to reach people, no matter where they live. Think, too, of ways that you can imitate the faith of those who spread the good news in the early days.

Reaching Large Audiences

³ **Newspapers.** Brother Russell and his associates had been publishing the *Watch Tower* since 1879, bringing the Kingdom message to many people. In the decade prior to 1914, however, Christ seems to have maneuvered matters so that the good news would reach an even wider audience. The chain of events began in 1903. In that year, Dr. E. L. Eaton, a spokesman for a group of Protestant ministers in Pennsylvania, challenged Charles Taze Russell to a series of debates on Bible doctrine. In a letter to Russell, Eaton wrote: "I have thought that a public debate of some of those questions about which you and I differ . . . would be of immense interest to the public." Russell and his associates also thought the public would be interested, so they arranged to have the debates published in a leading newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Gazette*. The newspaper articles were so

popular and Russell's clear explanation of Bible truth so compelling that the paper offered to publish Russell's lectures every week. How that development must have frustrated enemies of the truth!

4 More newspapers soon wanted to carry Russell's lectures. By 1908, the *Watch Tower* could report that the sermons were published in "eleven newspapers regularly." However, brothers familiar with newspaper work advised Russell that if he moved the Society's offices from Pittsburgh to a city that was better known, more newspapers would carry the Bible-based articles. After weighing that advice and other factors, Russell moved the offices to Brooklyn, New York, in 1909. The result? Just months after that move, some 400 newspapers were publishing the lectures, with more constantly being added to the list. By the time the Kingdom was established in 1914, over 2,000 newspapers in four languages were publishing Russell's sermons and articles!

5 What important lesson does that development provide? Those who have a measure of authority in God's organization today do well to imitate Russell's humility. In what way? When making important decisions, consider the advice of others.—**Read Proverbs 15:22.**

6 The Kingdom truths published in those newspaper articles changed people's lives. (Heb. 4:12) For example, Ora Hetzel, who was baptized in 1917, was one of many who first learned the truth through such articles. "After I was married," said Ora, "I went to visit my mother in Rochester, Minnesota. When I arrived, I found her cutting out articles from a newspaper. They were sermons by Russell. Mother explained the things she had learned from them." Ora accepted the truths she learned and for some six decades was a faithful proclaimer of God's Kingdom.

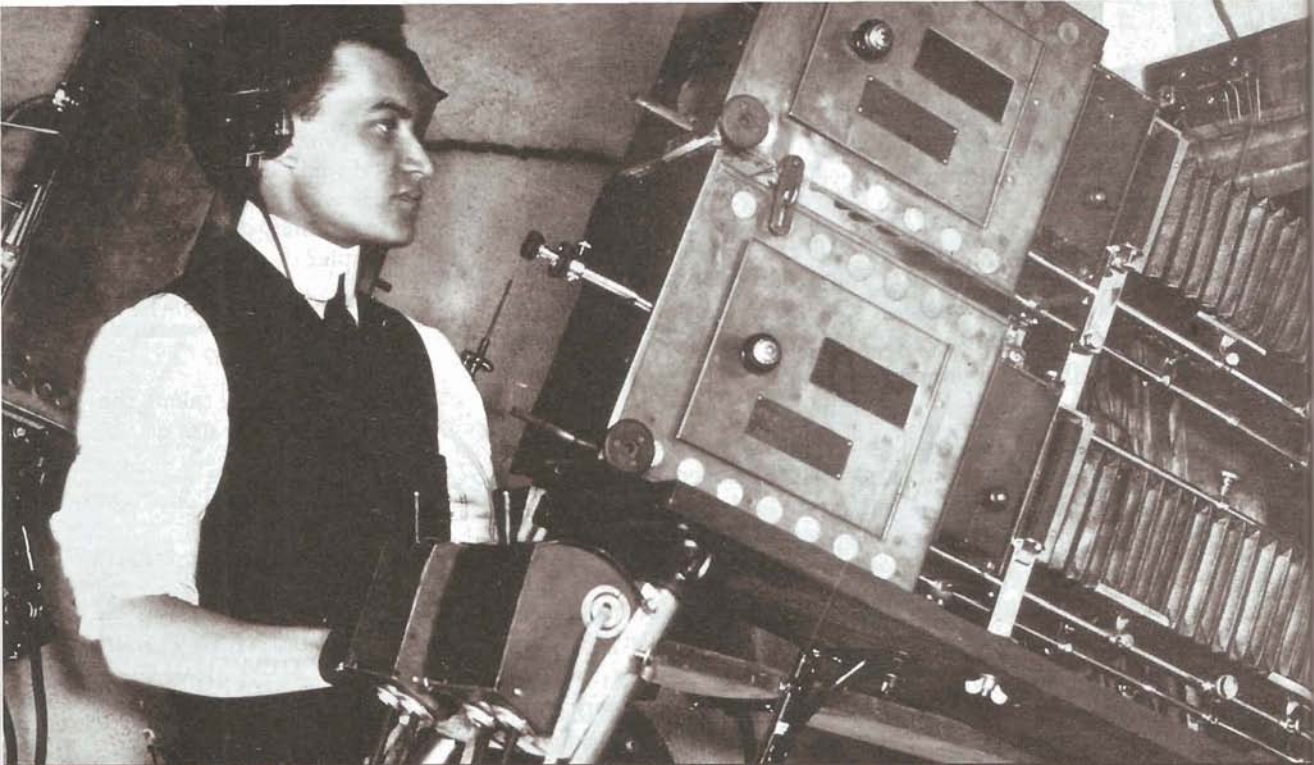
7 In 1916, two key events caused those taking the lead to reassess the use of newspapers in spreading the good news. First, the Great War that was raging at the time made printing supplies difficult to obtain. In 1916, a report from our newspaper department in Britain highlighted the challenge, saying: "There are just over 30 papers publishing the Sermons at the present time. It is quite likely that this number will be greatly reduced shortly owing to the increasingly high price of paper." The second event was the death of Brother Russell on October 31, 1916. Thus, *The Watch Tower* of December 15, 1916, announced: "Now that Brother Russell has passed beyond, the sermon feature [in the

4, 5. What quality did Russell display, and how can those with positions of responsibility imitate his example?

6. How did the truths published in newspaper articles affect one person?

7. Why did those taking the lead reassess the use of newspapers?

By 1914, over
2,000 newspapers
were publishing
Russell's sermons



A "Photo-Drama"
projection booth

"Photo-Drama"
glass slides

8. What was involved in producing the "Photo-Drama of Creation"?

newspapers] will be discontinued entirely." Although this avenue of preaching came to an end, other methods, such as the "Photo-Drama of Creation," continued to have great success.

8 Picture presentations. Russell and his associates worked for some three years to produce the "Photo-Drama of Creation," which was released in 1914. (Prov. 21:5) The Drama, as it was called, was an innovative combination of moving pictures, sound recordings, and colored glass slides. Hundreds of people took part in reenacting Bible scenes that were captured on film, and even animals were involved. "The largest part of the population of one of the large zoological gardens," says a report from 1913, "was brought into use in order to reproduce in Motion talking

pictures Noah's part in the big show." As for the hundreds of different glass slides used in the production, artists in London, New York, Paris, and Philadelphia colored each one by hand.

9 Why was so much time and expense poured into making the "Photo-Drama"? A resolution adopted at the 1913 series of conventions explains: "The unprecedented success of the American newspapers in moulding public opinion by the aid of cartoons and illustrations in their news and magazine sections, together with the wonderful popularity and adaptability of moving pictures, has fully demonstrated their worth and, we believe, fully justifies us, as progressive preachers and Bible class teachers, in giving our unqualified endorsement of moving pictures and stereopticon slides as an effective and desirable method for evangelists and teachers."

10 During 1914, the "Photo-Drama" was shown in 80 cities each day. Almost eight million people in the United States and Canada saw the presentation. That same year, the "Photo-Drama" was shown in Australia, Britain, Denmark, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. A simplified version of the production, one that did not include the motion pictures, was assembled for use in smaller towns. That version—the "Eureka Drama"—was cheaper to produce and easier to transport. By 1916, either the "Photo-Drama" or the "Eureka Drama" had been translated into Armenian, Dano-Norwegian, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Spanish, and Swedish.

11 The French translation of the "Photo-Drama" had a great impact on an 18-year-old named Charles Rohner. "It was presented in my town—Colmar, Alsace, France," says Charles. "From the very outset, I was impressed by the clear presentation of Bible truth."

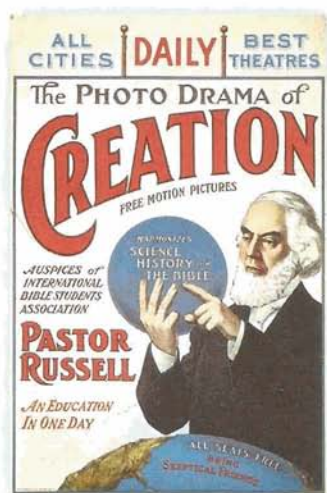
12 As a result, Charles was baptized and in 1922 entered full-time service. One of his first assignments was to help present the "Photo-Drama" to audiences in France. Describing this work, Charles says: "I was assigned several jobs—to play the violin, to be the accounts servant, and to be the literature servant. I was also asked to quiet the audience before the program began. During intermission, we presented literature. We assigned each brother or sister a section of the hall. Each one had an armful of literature and approached every person in the section. In addition, at the entrance to the hall, we had tables full of literature." In

9. Why was so much time and expense poured into making the "Photo-Drama"?

10. How widely was the "Photo-Drama" shown?

11, 12. What impact did the "Photo-Drama" have on one young man, and what example did he set?

During 1914, the "Photo-Drama" was shown in packed auditoriums



13, 14. How was radio used to spread the good news? (See also the boxes "Programs on WBBR" and "A Momentous Convention.")

15, 16. (a) How did the clergy in Canada react to our broadcasts? (b) How did radio lectures and the house-to-house work complement each other?

In 1922, an estimated 50,000 people heard the radio broadcast of the talk "Millions Now Living Will Never Die"

1925, Charles was invited to serve at Bethel in Brooklyn, New York. There he was assigned to conduct an orchestra for the newly established radio station WBBR. After considering the example of Brother Rohner, we could ask ourselves, 'Am I willing to accept whatever assignments I am given to help spread the Kingdom message?'—**Read Isaiah 6:8.**

13 Radio. In the 1920's, the work with the "Photo-Drama" began to wind down, but radio emerged as a significant way to spread the good news of the Kingdom. On April 16, 1922, Brother Rutherford gave his first radio broadcast from the Metropolitan Opera House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. An estimated 50,000 people heard the talk "Millions Now Living Will Never Die." Then, in 1923, came the first broadcast of a convention session. In addition to using commercial stations, those taking the lead decided that it would be wise for us to build our own station, which was built on Staten Island, New York, and registered as WBBR. The initial broadcast was aired on February 24, 1924.

14 Explaining the purpose of WBBR, *The Watch Tower* of December 1, 1924, said: "We believe that the radio is the most economical and effective way of spreading the message of the truth that has yet been used." It then added: "If the Lord sees fit to build other radio stations for the spreading of the truth, he will provide the money in his own good way." (Ps. 127:1) By 1926, Jehovah's people owned six radio stations. Two were located in the United States—WBBR in New York and WORD near Chicago. The other four were in Canada, located in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

15 This wide broadcasting of Bible truth did not go unnoticed by the clergy of Christendom. Albert Hoffman, who was familiar with the work done at the radio station in Saskatchewan, Canada, said: "More and more people began to know of the Bible Students [as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called]. A wonderful witness was given until 1928, when the clergy put pressure on officials and all the stations in Canada run by the Bible Students lost their licenses."

16 Despite the closure of our radio stations in Canada, Bible lectures continued to be transmitted on commercial stations. (Matt. 10:23) To boost the effectiveness of those programs, *The Watch Tower* and *The Golden Age* (now called *Awake!*) carried a list of commercial stations that broadcast Bible truth so that publishers calling from door to door

PROGRAMS ON WBBR

WBBR broadcast Bible lectures and music. It also carried such programs as "Watching the World." For this, brothers in the newsroom gathered reports from international news services. Another program had the title "A Young Minister Speaks." Yet another was called "Home Bible Study Time." In this program, Witnesses portrayed a model family Bible

study. WBBR also broadcast Bible dramas and reenactments of recent court trials involving Jehovah's people. Those reenactments exposed the clergy as promoters of opposition and turned the spotlight on prejudiced judges.



**WATCHTOWER
RADIO**



A MOMENTOUS CONVENTION

The year 1931 saw what was at the time the most extensive radio chain broadcast ever to air. A portion of the momentous convention held July 24-30 in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., was trans-

mitted via more than 450 radio stations in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. At this convention we adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses.

17, 18. Although circumstances changed, how did radio continue to play a role?

19, 20. Why have Jehovah's people produced jw.org, and how effective has it been? (See also the box "JW.ORG.")

could encourage people to listen to the lectures on their local stations. With what impact? The *Bulletin* (now called *Our Kingdom Ministry*) of January 1931 says: "The radio work has been a real stimulus to the friends in their canvassing from door to door. Many reports have come to the office telling us that persons have listened in and, because of hearing the lectures given by Brother Rutherford, were very ready to take the books offered to them." The *Bulletin* described the radio broadcasts and the house-to-house work as "the two great publicity branches of the Lord's organization."

¹⁷ During the 1930's, opposition mounted against our use of commercial radio stations. So in late 1937, Jehovah's people adapted to the changing circumstances. They withdrew from commercial broadcasting and focused even more on the house-to-house ministry.^[1] Nevertheless, radio continued to play an important role in spreading the Kingdom message in some remote or politically isolated parts of the world. For example, from 1951 to 1991, a station in West Berlin, Germany, regularly broadcast Bible discourses so that those living in parts of what was then East Germany could hear the Kingdom message. Starting in 1961 and for more than three decades afterward, a national radio station in Suriname, South America, broadcast a weekly 15-minute program that spread Bible truths. From 1969 to 1977, the organization produced more than 350 recorded radio programs in the series "All Scripture Is Beneficial." In the United States, 291 radio stations, in 48 states, carried the programs. In 1996, a radio station in Apia, the capital city of the South Pacific nation of Samoa, transmitted a weekly program entitled "Answers to Your Bible Questions."

¹⁸ As the 20th century drew to a close, radio no longer played a primary role in spreading the good news. However, another technology emerged that made it possible to reach an audience of unprecedented size.

¹⁹ **The Internet.** As of 2013, more than 2.7 billion people, almost 40 percent of the world's population, were connected to the Internet. According to certain estimates, some two billion access it on mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. That figure continues to climb globally, but the fastest growth in mobile Internet connection is currently occurring in Africa, where there are more than 90 million mobile Internet subscriptions. Those developments have fundamentally changed the way many people receive information.

FOOTNOTE

[1] In 1957, those taking the lead decided to shut down WBBR in New York, the last of our radio stations.



JW
.ORG

TM

**DOWNLOADED
EACH MONTH:**

About 3 million
short videos,
3 million complete
books, 4 million
complete magazines,
and 22 million
audio tracks

All figures as
of 2013

VISITS:

Each day jw.org
receives more than
750,000 individual
visits

SITE LANGUAGES:

Ability to navigate in
over 300 languages

PUBLICATIONS:

Available for download
in more than 520
languages



SOME METHODS USED TO REACH LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE



1914
"Photo-Drama
of Creation"^[2]



1933
Sound cars

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

(Year indicates when a particular method began to be used)

1903
Newspaper
sermons



1922
Radio



1936
Placard
work



21. What have you learned from the experience involving Sina?

22, 23. (a) Have the methods of reaching large audiences replaced the door-to-door ministry?
(b) How has the King blessed our efforts?

²⁰ Starting in 1997, Jehovah's people adopted this method of mass communication. In 2013, the jw.org Web site became available in some 300 languages, and Bible-based information was made available for download in over 520 languages. Each day the site receives more than 750,000 individual visits. Each month, in addition to viewing videos, people download over 3 million complete books, 4 million complete magazines, and 22 million audio tracks.

²¹ The Web site has become a powerful method of spreading the good news of God's Kingdom, even in lands where our preaching work is restricted. For example, early in 2013, a man named Sina found the jw.org site and called world headquarters, which is located in the United States, asking for more information about the Bible. What made this call unusual? Sina comes from a Muslim background and lives in a remote village in a country where the work of Jehovah's Witnesses is severely restricted. As a result of this call, arrangements were made for Sina to study the Bible twice a week with a Witness in the United States. The study was conducted using an Internet video service.

Teaching Individuals

²² None of the methods we have used to reach large audiences, such as newspapers, the "Photo-Drama," radio programs, and the Web site, were meant to replace the

FOOTNOTE

[2] The "Photo-Drama" included some motion pictures.

1954

Motion pictures



1997

Internet



1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010



1990

Videos



2011

Metropolitan
witnessing

door-to-door ministry. Why not? Because Jehovah's people learned from the pattern set by Jesus. He did more than preach to large crowds; he focused on helping individuals. (Luke 19:1-5) Jesus also trained his disciples to do the same, and he gave them a message to deliver. **(Read Luke 10:1, 8-11.)** As discussed in Chapter 6, those taking the lead have always encouraged each servant of Jehovah to speak to people face-to-face.—Acts 5:42; 20:20.

²³ One hundred years after the Kingdom's birth, more than 7.9 million publishers actively share in teaching others about God's purposes. Without question, the King has blessed the methods we have used to advertise the Kingdom. As the following chapter will show, he has also provided us with the tools we need to spread the good news to every nation, tribe, and tongue.—Rev. 14:6.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What events involving our use of newspapers, picture presentations, radio, and the Internet prove to you that the Kingdom is real?
- Why do we emphasize the door-to-door ministry?

8

Tools for Preaching Producing Literature for the Worldwide Field

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Jehovah continues to provide us with the tools we need to teach individuals from every nation, tribe, and tongue

1, 2. (a) In the first century, what helped to spread the good news throughout the Roman Empire?

(b) What evidence do we have of Jehovah's backing in our time? (See the box "Good News in More Than 670 Tongues.")

3. Why do we use a variety of tools in our preaching work?

VISITORS to Jerusalem could hardly believe what they were hearing. Galileans were speaking foreign languages fluently, and the message they were conveying captivated their listeners. It was Pentecost 33 C.E., and the disciples had miraculously received the gift of speaking in various languages—proof that they had God's backing. (**Read Acts 2:1-8, 12, 15-17.**) The good news they preached that day reached people of diverse backgrounds and thereafter spread throughout the Roman Empire.—Col. 1:23.

² Today, God's servants do not miraculously speak in various languages. Even so, covering far more languages than in the first century, they translate the Kingdom message into over 670 languages. (Acts 2:9-11) God's people have produced literature in such vast quantities and in so many languages that the Kingdom message has penetrated every corner of the globe.^[1] This too is unmistakable evidence that Jehovah is using the King Jesus Christ to direct our preaching work. (Matt. 28:19, 20) As we review just some of the tools we have used to accomplish this work over the past 100 years, note how the King has progressively trained us to be interested in individuals and has encouraged us to be teachers of God's Word.—2 Tim. 2:2.

The King Equips His Servants to Plant Seeds of Truth

³ Jesus likened the "word of the Kingdom" to seeds and a person's heart to soil. (Matt. 13:18, 19) Just as a gardener may use a variety of tools to soften the soil and prepare it to receive seed, Jehovah's people have used a variety of tools that have helped them prepare the hearts of millions to receive the Kingdom message. Some of those tools were useful for a limited time. Others, such as books and magazines, continue to do valuable work. Unlike most of the methods of mass communication mentioned in the preceding

FOOTNOTE

[1] In the past decade alone, Jehovah's people have produced more than 20 billion Bible-based publications. In addition, our Web site, jw.org, is now available to the more than 2.7 billion people worldwide who access the Internet.

GOOD NEWS IN MORE THAN 670 TONGUES

IN 2000, the Governing Body authorized an unprecedented training program for all translation teams worldwide. The first step was the development of a three-month course on English comprehension, which was presented by 25 instructors to 1,944 translators, who were working in 182 language teams. This course helped translators gain a complete understanding of the English text before starting to translate it. Besides dealing with aspects of the English language, the course taught translators how to analyze the text and be aware of such features as its structure, tone, style, purpose, and intended audience.

A second course was developed in 2001 by a pool of experienced translators. This course focuses on specific translation techniques. All the translation teams around the world have now been put through this training program.

In addition to organizing the training courses, the Governing Body established a Translator Help Desk. Whenever a translation team needs help in understanding the source text or is not sure about how a translation technique should be applied in a specific case, they can electronically submit their question to this desk. When the question raised is editorial in nature, the

Translator Help Desk consults with the compiler, or main editor, of the publication. Once a question is answered, it automatically becomes available not just to the team that originated it but to all translation teams around the world that are working on that same publication. The answer is stored in a database that any translator can easily access. In that way, any team facing similar translation problems can benefit from the direction given.

How has this training helped the translators? One said: "The training we have received grants us the freedom to explore techniques for handling the original text, but it also sets reasonable boundaries that prevent us from taking over the role of the writer. Now we feel like fully equipped explorers ready to take on a challenge every day, knowing well where to go, what alternate routes to take, and when to stop."

As of 2013, more than 2,700 translators were working in over 190 locations to help spread the good news in more than 670 tongues. This remarkable work is possible only because it has the backing of the King Jesus Christ.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Rev. 14:6.

A translation team
in Timor-Leste





Manufacturing phonographs and sound equipment, in Toronto, Canada

4, 5. How were phonograph records used, but what did they lack?

By 1940, more than 90 different recorded talks were available and over a million records had been made



chapter, all the tools discussed here have helped Kingdom publishers contact people face-to-face.—Acts 5:42; 17:2, 3.

4 Recorded talks. In the 1930's and into the 1940's, publishers used recorded Bible lectures played on portable phonographs. Each recording lasted less than five minutes. Sometimes the records had short titles, such as "Trinity," "Purgatory," and "Kingdom." How were those records used? Brother Clayton Woodworth, Jr., who was baptized in 1930 in the United States, said: "I carried a little suitcase-type phonograph, spring wound, with a portable arm that I had to set in just the right position at the edge of the record if it was to play properly. I would approach a door, open the case, set the arm in place, and push the doorbell. When the householder opened the door, I would say, 'I have an important message I would like you to hear.'" What was the response? "Many times," says Brother Woodworth, "the person responded favorably. At other times, people just shut the door. Occasionally, they thought that I was selling phonographs."

5 By 1940, over 90 different recorded talks were available and over a million records had been made. John E. Barr, who was pioneering in Britain at that time and who later served on the Governing Body, said: "During the years 1936 to 1945, a phonograph was my constant companion. In fact, in those days I felt lost without one. To hear Brother Rutherford's voice at the doorstep was ever so encouraging; it felt as though he were there in person. Of course,

phonograph work still lacked the teaching aspect of the ministry, the ability to touch the hearts of people.”

6 Testimony cards. Beginning in 1933, publishers were encouraged to use testimony cards in their door-to-door ministry. A testimony card was about three by five inches in size. It contained a brief Bible message and a description of Bible-based literature that the householder could obtain. A publisher would simply hand the card to the householder and ask him to read it. “I welcomed the testimony card work,” said Lilian Kammerud, who eventually served as a missionary in Puerto Rico and Argentina. Why was that? “Not all of us could give a good presentation,” she said. “So it helped me get accustomed to approaching people.”

7 Brother David Reusch, who was baptized in 1918, observed, “Testimony cards helped the brothers, for very few felt that they were able to say the right thing.” This tool had its limits, though. “Sometimes,” said Brother Reusch, “we met people who thought we could not speak. In a sense, many of us were not able to speak. But Jehovah was preparing us to meet the public as his ministers. Soon he would put words in our mouth by teaching us to use the Scriptures at the door. This was accomplished through the Theocratic Ministry School that began in the 1940’s.”

—Read Jeremiah 1:6-9.

8 Books. Since 1914, Jehovah’s people have produced over 100 different books that discuss Bible topics. Some of those books were specifically designed to train publishers to be effective ministers. Anna Larsen, in Denmark, who has been a publisher for some 70 years, says: “Jehovah helped us to be more effective publishers by means of the Theocratic Ministry School and the associated books we received. I remember that the first of those books was the *Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers*, released in 1945. It was followed by “*Equipped for Every Good Work*,” published in 1946. Now we have *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education*, published in 2001.” Certainly, the Theocratic Ministry School and related books have played a key role as Jehovah has “adequately qualified us to be ministers.” (2 Cor. 3:5, 6) Are you enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School? Do you bring the *Ministry School* book to the meeting each week and follow along as the school overseer refers to it? If you do, you will be allowing Christ to train you to be a better teacher.—2 Cor. 9:6; 2 Tim. 2:15.

6, 7. (a) What were the benefits and the limitations of using testimony cards?

(b) In what sense has Jehovah ‘put words in our mouths’?

8. How can you allow Christ to train you?

VOI SIETE UNA

fra i miliardi di persone oggi la cui preziosa vita è influenzata dalle invenzioni della scienza che si muovono più rapidamente di quanto lo possono gli ordinamenti sociali dell'uomo. In questa era della scienza atomica, volete voi essere del numero di coloro il cui destino è plasmato e fissato da uomini egoisti di questo mondo i quali non sanno dove conducono l'umanità?

Voi potete prendere una decisione per un futuro eterno di pace, sicurezza e felicità che il disastro finale di questo mondo non potrà disturbare. Come? Mediante la conoscenza della Parola di Dio, la Bibbia, che fu specialmente scritta profeticamente in vista dei tempi attuali.

La persona che vi consegna questa carta ha letteratura contenente spiegazioni delle Sacre Scritture relative agli adempimenti moderni delle profezie bibliche. Questa letteratura non è settaria, vale per tutti, a qualsiasi vincolo religioso si abbia rapporto. La persona che vi presenta questa carta è pronta e lieta di dimostrarvela e spiegarvela senza alcun impegno da parte vostra. Una benedizione vi attende.

Testimony card
(Italian)

9, 10. What role have books played in planting and watering seeds of truth?

11, 12. In harmony with the cited scriptures, what audiences were our magazines designed to reach?

⁹ Jehovah has also assisted us by having his organization provide books that help publishers to explain basic Bible teachings. *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* was a particularly effective book. It was first published in 1968 and had an immediate impact. “Demand for the *Truth* book has been so heavy,” stated the November 1968 *Kingdom Ministry*, “that in September the Society’s Brooklyn factory added a special night shift.” The article went on to explain: “At one time during August the demand for *Truth* books exceeded the supply by over one and a half million copies!” By 1982, over 100 million copies of the book had been published in 116 languages. In the 14 years from 1968 to 1982, the *Truth* book helped to add over one million Kingdom publishers to our ranks.^[2]

¹⁰ In 2005, another outstanding Bible study aid, *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, was released. Some 200 million copies have already been published in 256 languages! With what effect? In just seven years, from 2005 to 2012, about 1.2 million people became publishers of the good news. During that same period, the number of people studying the Bible with us climbed from about 6 million to more than 8.7 million. Without a doubt, Jehovah is blessing our efforts to plant and water seeds of Kingdom truth.—**Read 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7.**

¹¹ **Magazines.** Originally, the target audience for *The Watch Tower* was primarily the “little flock,” those with “the heavenly calling.” (Luke 12:32; Heb. 3:1) On October 1, 1919, Jehovah’s organization released another magazine, which was designed to appeal to a different audience, the public. That magazine became so popular with the Bible Students and the public that for many years its circulation was far greater than that of *The Watch Tower*. That magazine was first named *The Golden Age*. In 1937, the name was changed to *Consolation*. Then, in 1946, it became known as *Awake!*

¹² Over the decades, the style and format of *The Watchtower* and the *Awake!* have changed, but the purpose has remained the same—to advertise God’s Kingdom and build faith in the Bible. Today, *The Watchtower* is produced in a study edition and a public edition. The “domestics” are the intended audience for the study edition—that is, both the “little flock” and the “other sheep.”^[3] (Matt. 24:45; John 10:16) The public edition is prepared especially for those who do not yet know the truth but who have a respect for the Bible and for God. (Acts 13:16) *Awake!* focuses on those

FOOTNOTES

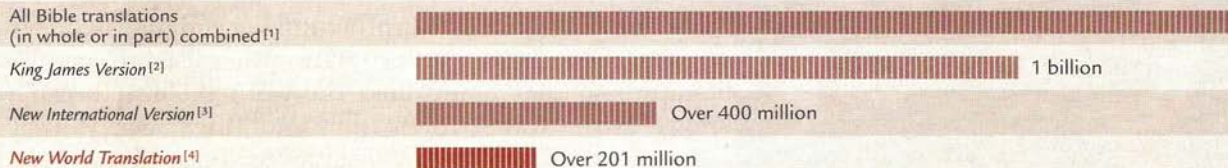
[2] Some other Bible study aids that have helped publishers teach Bible truth are *The Harp of God* (published in 1921), “*Let God Be True*” (published in 1946), *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* (published in 1982), and *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* (published in 1995).

[3] See the July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*, page 23, paragraph 13, which discusses our clarified understanding of who make up the “domestics.”

WORLD RECORDS FOR PUBLICATIONS

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED

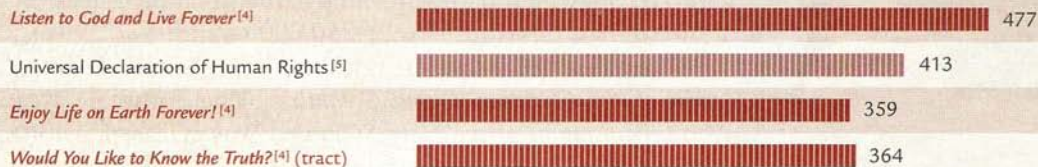
Bible



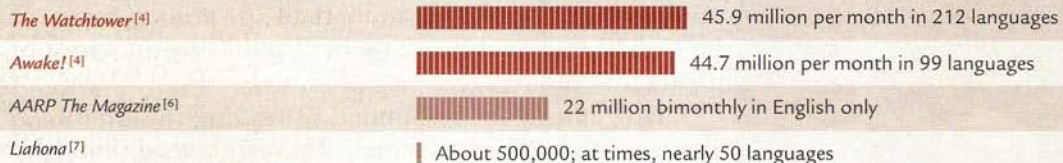
Other books



NUMBER OF LANGUAGES INTO WHICH A TEXT IS TRANSLATED



MOST PUBLISHED AND WIDELY TRANSLATED MAGAZINES



[1] Source: Guinness World Records

[2] Source: King James Bible Trust

[3] Source: Biblica Fact Sheet

[4] Published by Jehovah's Witnesses, as of January 2014

[5] Source: United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Web site, as of October 2013

[6] Source: AARP

[7] Published by the Mormons

13. What do you find remarkable about our magazines? (Discuss the chart “World Records for Publications.”)

14. What have we zealously promoted, and why?

15, 16. (a) What do you appreciate about the *New World Translation*? (Discuss the box “Speeding Up Bible Translation.”) (b) How can you allow Jehovah to touch your heart?

who know little about the Bible and the true God, Jehovah.—Acts 17:22, 23.

¹³ By the beginning of the 2014 service year, each month more than 44 million copies of *Awake!* and some 46 million copies of *The Watchtower* were published. *Awake!* was translated into some 100 languages, and *The Watchtower*, into over 200, which made them the most widely translated and distributed magazines on earth! As remarkable as those achievements are, they should not surprise us. These magazines contain the message that Jesus said would be preached in all the inhabited earth.—Matt. 24:14.

¹⁴ **The Bible.** In 1896, Brother Russell and his associates changed the name of the corporation they used to publish literature so that it included the word Bible; it became known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. That change was appropriate because the Bible has always been the primary tool for spreading the good news about the Kingdom. (Luke 24:27) In harmony with the legal corporation’s name, God’s servants have zealously promoted the distribution and reading of the Bible. For example, in 1926, we printed on our own presses *The Emphatic Diaglott*, a translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures produced by Benjamin Wilson. Beginning in 1942, we printed and distributed some 700,000 copies of the entire *King James Version*. Just two years later, we began printing the *American Standard Version*, which uses Jehovah’s name in 6,823 places. By 1950, we had distributed over 250,000 copies.

¹⁵ The year 1950 saw the release of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. The complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was released in one volume in 1961. This translation honors Jehovah by restoring his name to the locations where it appeared in the original Hebrew text. The divine name also appears 237 times in the main text of the Christian Greek Scriptures. To ensure that it is as accurate and readable as possible, the *New World Translation* has been revised several times, most recently in 2013. As of 2013, more than 201 million copies of the *New World Translation* have been published in whole or in part in 121 languages.

¹⁶ How have some responded to reading the *New World Translation* in their own language? A Nepali man said: “For many, the old Nepalese translation that we had was difficult to understand, since it used classical language. But now we can understand the Bible so much better, as it uses the language of everyday life.” When a woman in the

SPEEDING UP BIBLE TRANSLATION

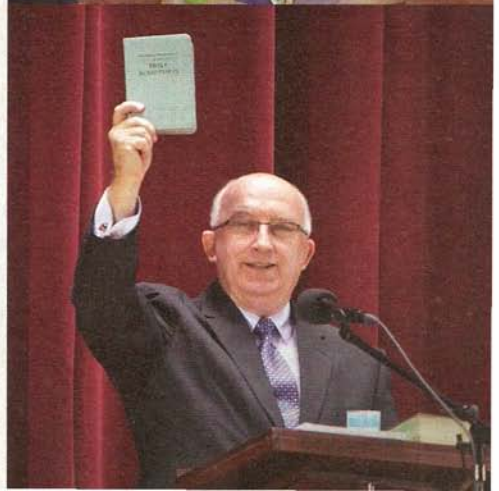
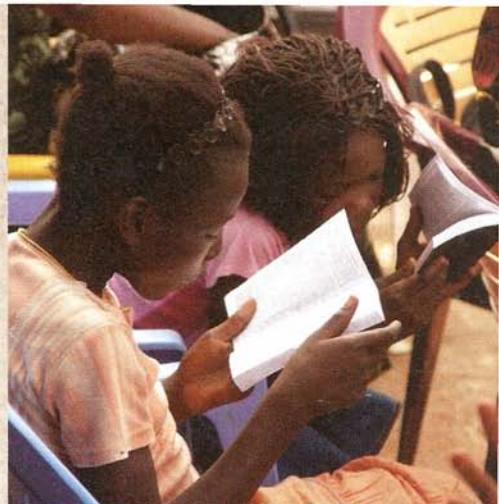
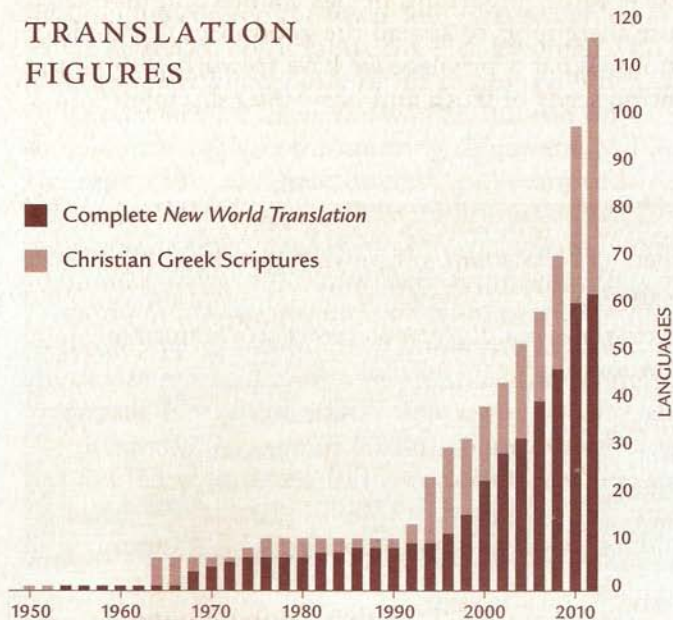
BY 1989, the *New World Translation* had been published, in whole or in part, in 11 languages. To help fill the growing need for the *New World Translation*, the Writing Committee of the Governing Body arranged for training courses to help translators approach the work systematically and efficiently. The MEPS Programming department developed a computer program called the Bible Translation System.^[4] This program does not translate the text, but it does help translators to organize their work and easily access reference material. Devoted translators, trainers, and support personnel have worked hard to help produce Bibles in language after language.

As a result of those efforts, by 2004 the *New World Translation* was available in over 50 languages! Just nine years later, in 2013, there were 121 language editions of the *New World Translation* available, and the number continues to grow.

FOOTNOTE

[4] The Bible Translation System is now part of a program called Watchtower Translation System, which is used worldwide by thousands of translators.

TRANSLATION FIGURES



17. How can you show that you appreciate the tools and training that you receive, and what will be the result if you do so?

18. What privilege do we have?

Central African Republic began reading the Sango translation, she started to cry and said, "This is the language of my heart." Like that woman, each of us can allow Jehovah to touch our heart by reading his Word every day.—Ps. 1:2; Matt. 22:36, 37.

Grateful for the Tools and Training

¹⁷ Do you appreciate the tools and progressive training that the King Jesus Christ has given us? Do you make time to read the literature God's organization produces, and do you use it to help others? If so, you will relate to the comments of Sister Opal Betler, who was baptized on October 4, 1914. Opal said: "Through the years, my husband [Edward] and I used the phonograph and the testimony cards. We witnessed from house to house with books, booklets, and magazines. We went on campaigns and marches and distributed printed proclamations. Later we were trained to make back-calls [now referred to as return visits] and hold Bible studies in the homes of interested persons. It has been a busy and happy life." Jesus promised that his subjects would be busy sowing, reaping, and rejoicing together. Millions like Opal can testify to the truthfulness of that promise.—**Read John 4:35, 36.**

¹⁸ Many who are not yet servants of the King might consider God's people to be "uneducated and ordinary." (Acts 4:13) But just think! The King has caused his ordinary people to become a publishing powerhouse, producing some of the most widely translated and distributed publications in history! More important, he has trained and motivated us to use these tools to spread the good news to people of all nations. What a privilege we have to work with Christ in planting seeds of truth and harvesting disciples!

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How does our translation work prove that we have the King's backing?
- What facts about our publications prove to you that the Kingdom is real?
- What can you do to show appreciation for the tools that the King provides?

Results of Preaching

“The Fields . . . Are White for Harvesting”

9

THE disciples are puzzled. Jesus has told them: “Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting.” They gaze in the direction to which Jesus gestures, but all they see are fields that are, not white, but green—the color of recently sprouted barley. ‘What harvest?’ they likely reason. ‘It will take months before the harvest takes place.’—John 4:35.

² Jesus, though, is not speaking about a literal harvest. Instead, he is using this occasion to teach his disciples two important lessons concerning a spiritual harvest—a harvest of people. What are those lessons? To find out, let us consider the account in more detail.

A Call to Action and a Promise of Joy

³ Jesus’ conversation with his disciples occurred at the end of 30 C.E., near the Samaritan town of Sychar. While his disciples entered the town, Jesus stayed behind at a well where he shared spiritual truths with a woman who quickly grasped the importance of his teachings. When the disciples returned to Jesus, the woman hurried off to Sychar to tell her neighbors the amazing things she had learned. Her report aroused great interest, and many of her neighbors rushed toward the well to meet Jesus. Possibly at that moment—as Jesus gazed beyond the fields into the distance and saw a crowd of Samaritans approaching—he stated: “View the fields, that they are white for harvesting.”^[1] Then, to clarify that he meant, not a literal harvest, but a spiritual one, Jesus added: “The reaper is . . . gathering fruit for everlasting life.”—John 4:5-30, 36.

⁴ What two important lessons about the spiritual harvest did Jesus teach? First, **the work is urgent**. His declaration that “the fields . . . are white for harvesting” was a call to action for his followers. To impress upon his disciples

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Jehovah has made the seeds of Kingdom truth grow

1, 2. (a) Why are the disciples puzzled? (b) Jesus speaks about what type of harvest?

3. (a) What possibly prompted Jesus to say: “The fields . . . are white for harvesting”? (See footnote.) (b) How did Jesus clarify his statement?

4. (a) What two lessons about the harvest did Jesus teach? (b) What questions will we consider?

FOOTNOTE

[1] Jesus’ remark about ‘the fields being white’ could allude to the white robes that may have been worn by the crowd of Samaritans whom Jesus saw approaching.

5. Who takes the lead in the global harvest, and how does John's vision indicate that the work is urgent?

6. (a) When did "the harvest season" begin?
(b) When did the actual "harvest of the earth" begin? Explain.

the degree of urgency, Jesus added: "Already the reaper is receiving wages." Yes, the harvest had *already* begun—there was no time for delay! Second, **the workers are joyful**. Sowers and reapers will "rejoice together," said Jesus. (John 4:35b, 36) Just as Jesus himself must have rejoiced on seeing that "many of the Samaritans . . . put faith in him," so his disciples would experience deep joy as they worked whole-souled in the harvest. (John 4:39-42) This first-century account has special meaning for us because it illustrates what is happening today during the greatest spiritual harvest of all time. When did this modern-day harvest begin? Who have a share in it? What have been the results?

Our King Takes the Lead in the Greatest Harvest of All Time

⁵ In a vision given to the apostle John, Jehovah reveals that he assigned Jesus to take the lead in a global harvest of people. (**Read Revelation 14:14-16.**) In this vision, Jesus is described as having a crown and a sickle. The "golden crown on [Jesus'] head" confirms his position as ruling King. The "sharp sickle in his hand" confirms his role as Harvester. By stating through an angel that "the harvest of the earth is fully ripe," Jehovah emphasizes that **the work is urgent**. Indeed, "the *hour* has come to reap"—there is no time for delay! In response to God's command "put your sickle in," Jesus thrusts in his sickle, and the earth is reaped—that is, people of the earth are reaped. This exciting vision reminds us that again "the fields . . . are white for harvesting." Does this vision help us to determine when this global harvest began? Yes!

⁶ Since John's vision in Revelation chapter 14 shows Jesus, the Harvester, wearing a crown (verse 14), his appointment as King in 1914 had already taken place. (Dan. 7:13, 14) Sometime after that, Jesus is commanded to start the harvest (verse 15). The same order of events is seen in Jesus' parable about the harvest of the wheat, where he states: "The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things." Thus, the harvest season and the conclusion of this system of things began at the same time—in 1914. Later "*in the harvest season*," the actual harvesting began. (Matt. 13:30, 39) Looking back from our vantage point in time, we can see that the harvest began some years after Jesus started ruling as King. First, from 1914 until the early part of 1919, Jesus carried out a cleansing work among his anointed followers. (Mal. 3:1-3; 1 Pet. 4:17) Then, in 1919, "the harvest

of the earth” began. Without delay, Jesus used the newly appointed faithful slave to help our brothers see the urgency of the preaching work. Consider what happened.

7 In July 1920, *The Watch Tower* stated: “It seems evident from an examination of the Scriptures that a great privilege is granted unto the church in delivering a message concerning the kingdom.” For instance, Isaiah’s prophetic words helped the brothers to see that the Kingdom news had to be announced worldwide. (Isa. 49:6; 52:7; 61:1-3) How such a work could be accomplished they did not know, but they trusted that Jehovah would open the way for them. (**Read Isaiah 59:1.**) As a result of this clearer view about the urgency of the preaching work, our brothers were encouraged to step up their activities. How did the brothers respond?

8 In December 1921, *The Watch Tower* announced: “It has been the best year of all; and greater numbers of people have heard the message of truth during 1921 than in any previous year.” The magazine added: “There is much yet to be done. . . . Let us do it with a joyful heart.” Note how the brothers grasped the same two important facts about the preaching work that Jesus had impressed upon his apostles: The work is **urgent**, and the workers are **joyful**.

9 During the 1930’s, after the brothers understood that a great crowd of other sheep would respond to the Kingdom message, the preaching work intensified further. (Isa. 55:5; John 10:16; Rev. 7:9) The result? The number of those preaching the Kingdom message rose from 41,000 in 1934 to 500,000 in 1953! *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1954, rightly concluded: “It is Jehovah’s spirit and the power of his Word that have accomplished this great world-wide harvest.”^[2]—Zech. 4:6.

7. (a) What examination helped our brothers to see the urgency of the preaching work? (b) What were our brothers encouraged to do?

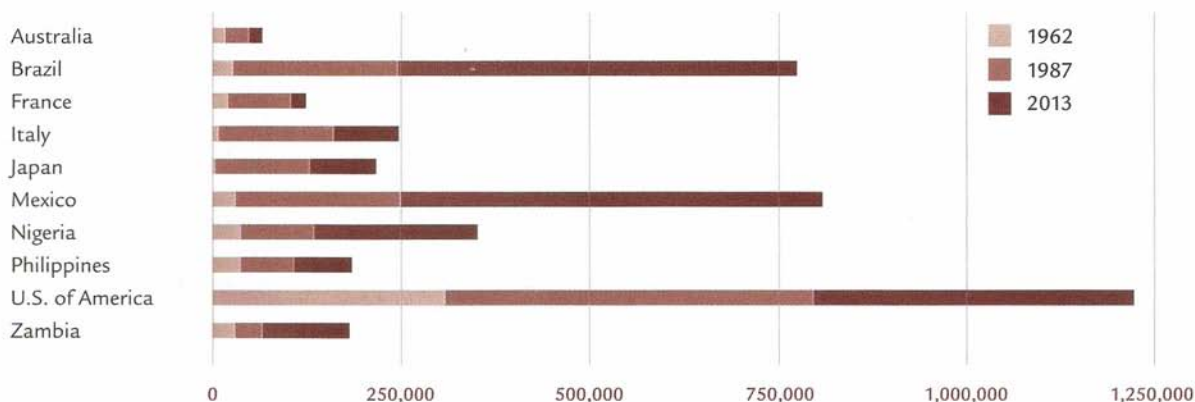
8. In 1921, what two facts about the preaching work did our brothers grasp?

9. (a) In 1954, what did *The Watchtower* state about the harvest work, and why? (b) What worldwide increase in publishers has taken place during the past 50 years? (See the chart “Worldwide Increase.”)

FOOTNOTE

[2] To learn more about those years and the decades that followed, we encourage you to read pages 425-520 of the book *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, which relate what the harvest work accomplished from 1919 to 1992.

WORLDWIDE INCREASE

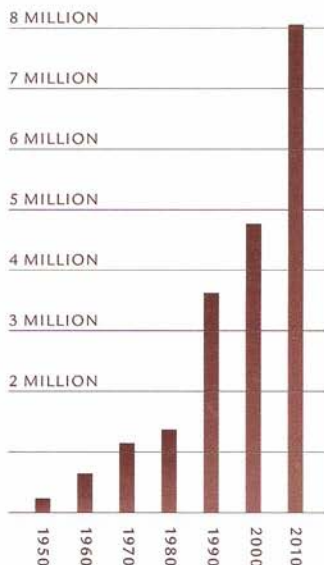


10, 11. In the parable of the mustard grain, what aspects of the seed's growth are highlighted?

12. How does the parable of the mustard grain apply to today's harvest? (See also the chart "Growing Number of Bible Studies.")

13. The parable of the leaven highlights what aspects of growth?

GROWING NUMBER OF BIBLE STUDIES



The Result of the Harvest —Foretold in Vivid Word Pictures

10 In his Kingdom parables, Jesus foretold in vivid language the result of the harvest work. Let us consider the parable about the mustard grain and the one about the leaven. We will focus particularly on how they have been fulfilled in the time of the end.

11 The parable of the mustard grain. A man plants a mustard grain. It then grows into a tree in which birds find shelter. (**Read Matthew 13:31, 32.**) What aspects of the growth of the seed are highlighted in this parable? (1) The *extent* of the growth is amazing. "The tiniest of all the seeds" becomes a tree with "great branches." (Mark 4:31, 32) (2) Growth is *assured*. "When [the seed] has been sown, it grows." Jesus does not say, "It may grow." No, he states: "It grows." Its growth is unstoppable. (3) The growing tree attracts visitors and provides *lodging*. "The birds of heaven come" and "find lodging under its shadow." How do these three aspects apply to the modern-day spiritual harvest?

12 (1) Extent of growth: The parable highlights the growth of the Kingdom message and the Christian congregation. Since 1919, zealous harvest workers have been gathered into the restored Christian congregation. At that time, the number of workers was small, but it grew rapidly. In fact, its growth from the early 1900's to today has been phenomenal. (Isa. 60:22) (2) **Assurance:** The growth of the Christian congregation has been unstoppable. No matter how many layers of rocklike opposition God's enemies placed upon the tiny seed, it kept growing—pushing aside all obstacles. (Isa. 54:17) (3) **Lodging:** "The birds of heaven" that find lodging in the tree represent many millions of righteous individuals from some 240 lands who have responded to the Kingdom message by becoming part of the Christian congregation. (Ezek. 17:23) There they receive spiritual food, refreshment, and protection.—Isa. 32:1, 2; 54:13.

13 The parable of the leaven. After a woman adds some leaven to a mass of flour, the leaven ferments the whole mass. (**Read Matthew 13:33.**) What aspects of growth are highlighted in this parable? Let us consider two. (1) Growth causes *transformation*. The leaven spread "until the whole mass was fermented." (2) Growth is *pervasive*. The leaven ferments all "three large measures of flour"—the entire mass. How do these two aspects apply to the modern-day spiritual harvest?



The parable of the mustard seed shows that lodging and protection are enjoyed by those in the Christian congregation
(See paragraphs 11, 12)

¹⁴ (1) Transformation: The leaven stands for the Kingdom message, and the mass of flour represents mankind. As leaven causes a change in flour after the two are mixed together, so the Kingdom message causes a transformation in the hearts of individuals after they accept that message. (Rom. 12:2) (2) Pervasive: The spreading of the leaven stands for the spreading of the Kingdom message. Leaven works its way through the dough until it has spread throughout the entire mass. Similarly, the Kingdom message has spread “to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) This aspect of the parable also indicates that even in lands where our work is under ban, the Kingdom message will spread, though our preaching activities in those parts of the earth may largely go unnoticed.

¹⁵ Some 800 years before Jesus spoke those parables, Jehovah, by means of Isaiah, foretold in memorable language

14. How does the parable of the leaven apply to today’s harvest?

15. How have the words found at Isaiah 60:5, 22 been fulfilled? (See also the boxes “Jehovah Made It Possible,” page 93, and “How ‘the Small One’ Has Become ‘a Mighty Nation,’” pages 96-97.)

16, 17. What is one reason why ‘the sower and the reaper rejoice together’? (See also the box “How Two Tracts Touched Two Hearts in the Amazon.”)

18. What reason for joy is mentioned at 1 Corinthians 3:8?

19. (a) How does Jesus’ prophecy found at Matthew 24:14 relate to our joy? (b) What should we keep in mind even if we do not personally succeed in making a disciple?

the scope of the modern-day spiritual harvest and the joy this harvest would cause.^[3] Jehovah describes people “from far away” streaming toward his organization. Directing himself to a “woman,” who today is represented by the anointed remnant on earth, he states: “You will see and become radiant, and your heart will throb and overflow, because the wealth of the sea will be directed to you; the resources of the nations will come to you.” (Isa. 60:1, 4, 5, 9) How true those words are! Today, longtime servants of Jehovah are indeed radiant with joy as they observe how the number of Kingdom publishers in their lands has increased from just a few to many thousands.

Why All Servants of Jehovah Have Reason to Rejoice

¹⁶ You will recall that Jesus told his apostles: “The reaper is . . . gathering fruit for everlasting life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together.” (John 4:36) How do we “rejoice *together*” in the global harvest? In several ways. Let us consider three.

¹⁷ First, we rejoice to see Jehovah’s role in the work. When we preach the Kingdom message, we sow seed. (Matt. 13:18, 19) When we help someone to become a disciple of Christ, we harvest fruitage. And all of us feel deep joy as we observe with awe how Jehovah causes Kingdom seed to “sprout and grow tall.” (Mark 4:27, 28) Some seed that we scatter sprouts later and is harvested by others. You may have had an experience similar to that of Joan, a Christian sister in Britain who was baptized 60 years ago. She said: “I have met individuals who told me that I planted a seed in their heart when I preached to them years ago. Unknown to me, other Witnesses later studied the Bible with them and helped them to become servants of Jehovah. I rejoice that the seed I planted grew and was harvested.”—**Read 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7.**

¹⁸ Second, we remain joyful workers when we keep in mind that Paul stated: “Each person will receive his own reward according to his *own work*.” (1 Cor. 3:8) The reward is given according to the work, not according to the results of that work. How heartening that assurance is for those preaching in territories where there is little response! In God’s eyes, every Witness who wholeheartedly shares in the sowing work is “bearing much fruit” and therefore has reason to rejoice.—John 15:8; Matt. 13:23.

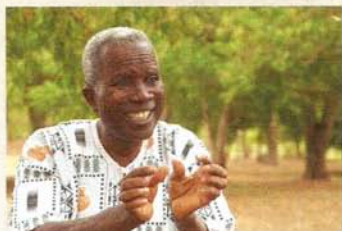
¹⁹ Third, we rejoice that our work fulfills prophecy. Consider Jesus’ answer to his apostles when they asked: “What

FOOTNOTE

[3] For more details about this colorful prophecy, see *Isaiah’s Prophecy—Light for All Mankind II*, pages 303-320.

JEHOVAH MADE IT POSSIBLE

JESUS declared: “Things impossible with men are possible with God.” (Luke 18:27) Many of us have experienced the truth of that statement. Despite all the efforts of those who want to stop the preaching work, Jehovah has helped us to carry it out.



Zacharie Elegbe (aged 66, baptized in 1963) recalls how a ban against the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses in **Benin** actually helped the brothers: “In 1976, when we had 2,300 publishers, our work was banned and the government ordered the ban to be broadcast in every local language. That was unheard of. Though Benin’s population speaks more than 60 languages, radio programs back then were usually broadcast in only five. So when the ban was broadcast in *all* local languages, many thousands of people living in remote areas heard of us for the very first time. They wondered, ‘Who are Jehovah’s Witnesses, and why are they banned?’ Later, when we reached those areas, many accepted the truth in short order.” Today, there are more than **11,500** Witnesses in Benin.

“This is Jehovah’s work. Nobody is able to stop it!”



Mariya Zinich (aged 74, baptized in 1957): “When I was about 12 years old, our whole family was exiled from Ukraine to Siberia, **Russia**. Despite all efforts of the government to silence us throughout the former Soviet Union, our numbers kept increasing. Seeing that amazing growth in spite of harsh opposition convinced me that this is Jehovah’s work. Nobody is able to stop it!” Another sister named Mariya (aged 73, baptized in 1960) noted: “As a result of deporting our brothers to Siberia, the government caused many isolated people there to get a chance to hear the truth.”



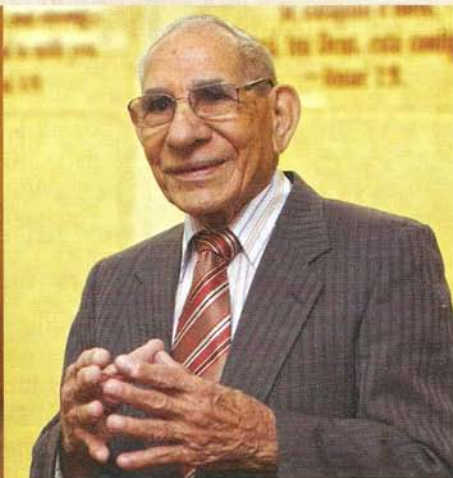
“With Jehovah on our side, nothing is impossible!”

Jesús Martín (aged 77, baptized in 1955) recalls: “When I learned the truth, there were 300 Witnesses here in **Spain**. In 1960, the repression against us became brutal. The government ordered the police to snuff out Jehovah’s Witnesses. At that time, it was hard to imagine how we would ever be able to preach the good news throughout the country. Everything seemed to be stacked against us. But today, there are nearly **111,000** Witnesses in Spain. Having witnessed how that growth has taken place despite opposition reinforces my conviction that with Jehovah on our side, nothing is impossible!”

HOW TWO TRACTS TOUCHED TWO HEARTS IN THE AMAZON



The first congregation in Brazil's Amazonas State



Antônio Simões

A FAITHFUL 91-year-old Christian elder named Antônio Simões fondly remembers how his father and his uncle found the truth by means of two tracts published by Jehovah's Witnesses. "Do you want to hear about it?" he asks his visitors. "We would love to," they say. Antônio's kind eyes light up, and with a smile he sits down to tell his story.

"My father, Zeno, was a Baptist preacher. In 1931, he traveled to a remote part of the Amazon forest to visit a church member. In her home, he noticed two Bible tracts. She had found them in the church, but she didn't know who left them. One tract spoke about hell; the other about the resurrection. Father was touched by what he read. He immediately thought about his brother-in-law, Guilherme, who had often told him: 'I don't believe in hellfire. A God of love couldn't create such a place.' Eager to show the tracts to Guilherme, Father got into his canoe and paddled for eight hours to Manaquiri, a

settlement near Manaus, where Guilherme was living.

"After Father and Uncle Guilherme examined the tracts, both said, 'This is the truth!' Right away, they wrote to the branch office in Brazil, asking for literature. Father resigned as a pastor, and he and my uncle began sharing the Bible's message in that isolated area. The people responded so well that within a year a congregation was formed in Manaquiri. Before long, 70 villagers attended the meetings, making it, at the time, the largest congregation in Brazil." Antônio pauses. Then, he asks, "Isn't it wonderful to hear how the Kingdom message entered the Amazon?" Indeed, it is. Two tiny scattered seeds—two small Bible tracts—took root in the vast Amazon forest and sprouted into a flourishing congregation. And today the 83-year-old Manaquiri Congregation is no longer the only congregation in Brazil's Amazonas State, but one of 143!

will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" He told them that one feature of that sign would be a global preaching work. Was he speaking of the disciple-making work? No. He said: "This good news of the Kingdom will be *preached* in all the inhabited earth for a witness." (Matt. 24:3, 14) Thus, Kingdom preaching—sowing seed—is a feature of the sign. Hence, as we preach the good news of the Kingdom, we keep in mind that even if we do not succeed in making a disciple, we do succeed in giving "a witness."^[4] Yes, no matter how people respond, we share in fulfilling Jesus' prophecy and have the honor to serve as "God's fellow workers." (1 Cor. 3:9) What good reason to rejoice!

"From the Rising of the Sun to Its Setting"

²⁰ In the first century, Jesus helped his apostles to see that the harvest work was urgent. From 1919 onward, Jesus has helped his modern-day disciples to grasp the same truth. In response, God's people have intensified their activities. In fact, the harvest work has proved to be unstoppable. As foretold by the prophet Malachi, the preaching work is being carried out today "from the rising of the sun to its setting." (Mal. 1:11) Yes, from sunrise to sunset—from east to west, no matter where they are on earth—sowers and reapers work and rejoice together. And from sunrise to sunset—from morning till evening, or all day long—we work with a sense of urgency.

²¹ As we look back today over some 100 years and see how a small group of God's servants has grown into "a mighty nation," our heart does indeed "throb and overflow" with joy. (Isa. 60:5, 22) May that joy and our love for Jehovah, "the Master of the harvest," impel each one of us to keep on doing our share in completing the greatest harvest of all time!—Luke 10:2.

20, 21. (a) How are the words of Malachi 1:11 being fulfilled? (b) As to the harvest work, what are you determined to do, and why?

FOOTNOTE

[4] That vital truth was already understood by the early Bible Students. *Zion's Watch Tower* of November 15, 1895, stated: "If but little wheat can be garnered, abundant testimony to the truth can at least be borne. . . . All can preach the gospel."

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What has the Kingdom accomplished in relation to the spiritual harvest?
- How do the parables of the mustard grain and the leaven encourage you to carry out your ministry?
- What reasons do you have to rejoice in the ministry?

HOW “THE SMALL ONE” HAS BECOME “A MIGHTY NATION”

“THE little one will become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own time.” (Isa. 60:22)
How has that prophecy come true? How has its fulfillment affected longtime Witnesses around the world?



Börje Nilsson (aged 84, baptized in 1943): “I remember an anointed brother who was a colporteur in the 1920’s. When he received nearly half of **Sweden** as his assignment, he obediently began preaching—and how his work and that of other faithful ones has been rewarded! Today we have over **22,000** publishers. Though I’m now up in years, I want to continue obediently in Jehovah’s service. Who knows what surprises Jehovah still has in store for us?”



Etienne Esterhuyse (aged 83, baptized in 1942): “Today, I look back in wonderment as I see how the number of Jehovah’s people in **South Africa** has grown from some 1,500 in 1942 to over **94,000** today. It is absolutely faith-strengthening to be part of such a vast organization!”



Keith Gaydon (aged 82, baptized in 1948): “Witnessing how the number of publishers in **Britain** increased from some 13,700 in 1948 to nearly **137,000** today demonstrates to me that this is Jehovah’s work. By human power it would have been impossible, but Jehovah is ‘the One doing wonders.’”—Ex. 15:11.

Ulrike Krolop (aged 77, baptized in 1952): “After World War II, the congregations in **Germany** were invigorated by the active spirit of the Witnesses who had endured Nazi persecution. People needed comfort, and we could give it without hesitation because the Witnesses had not participated in that terrible war. Over the past 60 years, I have observed how God’s spirit has guided his people. Today we have over **164,000** Witnesses—what a wonderful result!”





Mariya Brinetskaya (aged 77, baptized in 1955): “To avoid arrest, I was baptized at night under the cover of darkness. Later my husband was sent to a distant labor camp for being a Witness. Cautiously, I continued preaching in my village here in **Russia**, and several neighbors accepted the truth. Back then, we had few brothers and sisters. I rejoice that today there are over **168,000** Witnesses in Russia!”



Kimiko Yamano (aged 79, baptized in 1954): “When I learned in 1970 that we had 10,000 publishers in **Japan**, I could not hold back my tears of joy, and I was moved to promise Jehovah anew, ‘As long as I live, I want to be loyal to you.’ Imagine how happy I feel today, as we now have more than **216,000** publishers!”



Daniel Odogun (aged 83): “When I was baptized in 1950, **Nigeria** had 8,000 publishers. Today, there are some **351,000!** At assemblies, I’m moved when I see so many in attendance, and I think of Haggai 2:7. Jehovah is really shaking the nations, and the precious things are coming in. I still try to do as much as possible in the preaching work because preaching is my way of saying, ‘Thank you, Jehovah!’”



Carlos Silva (aged 79): “We had 5,000 Witnesses in **Brazil** when I was baptized in 1952. That year, we had an assembly in a gymnasium in São Paulo. There were two cars in the parking lot. A brother pointed to the nearby Pacaembu Stadium and asked me, ‘Do you think we’ll ever fill it?’ It seemed impossible, but in 1973 the stadium was packed with 94,586 in attendance! Today we have over **767,000** dear brothers and sisters in Brazil—it’s marvelous to see the increase!”



Carlos Cázares (aged 73): “In 1954, the year I was baptized, there were 10,500 publishers in **Mexico**. The need for workers was so great that I was appointed as a circuit overseer at the age of 21. It has been a blessing to see the fulfillment of Isaiah 60:22 before my very eyes. We now have more than **806,000** publishers, who are conducting over one million Bible studies! It’s overwhelming!”

Left:
The Brooklyn Bethel
family celebrated
its last Christmas
in 1926

Right:
People notice that
Jehovah's Witnesses
are different



SECTION 3

KINGDOM STANDARDS

Seeking God's
Righteousness



YOU wave to your neighbor as you walk by. Lately, you have noticed that he has been observing you and your family. He waves back and then beckons you over. He says: “May I just ask a question? What is it that makes you people so different?” “What do you mean?” you ask. “Well,” he says, “you are Jehovah’s Witnesses, right? You are not like anybody else. You do not fit in with the other religions—you don’t celebrate the holidays, and you don’t get involved in politics and wars. None of you smoke. And your family seems to have high

moral standards. What is it that makes you people so different in so many ways?”

You know that the answer comes down to one thing: We live under the rulership of God’s Kingdom. As King, Jesus is ever refining us. He is helping us to walk in his footsteps and thus to stand out as different in this wicked world. In this section, we will see how the Messianic Kingdom has been refining God’s people spiritually, morally, and organizationally—all to Jehovah’s glory.

10

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Why and how Jesus has refined and cleansed his followers spiritually

1-3. What did Jesus do when he found that the temple was being polluted?

4, 5. (a) How were Jesus' anointed followers refined and cleansed from 1914 to early 1919? (b) Was that the end of the refining and cleansing for God's people? Explain.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Visiting Jews had to use certain currency to pay the annual temple tax, and the money changers charged a fee to convert coins into the required currency. Additionally, visitors might have needed to buy animals for offerings. Jesus called the merchants "robbers," likely because they charged exorbitant prices or fees for their services.

[2] Jehovah's people on earth worship him in the earthly courtyards of his great spiritual temple.

The King Refines His People Spiritually

JESUS had great respect for the temple in Jerusalem because he knew what it stood for. The temple had long been the center of true worship on earth. But that worship—the worship of the holy God, Jehovah—must be clean and pure. Imagine, then, how Jesus felt when he came to the temple on Nisan 10, 33 C.E., and found that it was being polluted. What was happening?—**Read Matthew 21:12, 13.**

² In the Court of the Gentiles, greedy merchants and money changers were taking unfair advantage of the worshippers who came to present offerings to Jehovah.^[1] Jesus "threw out all those selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers." (Compare Nehemiah 13:7-9.) He denounced those selfish men for turning his Father's house into "a cave of robbers." Jesus thereby showed his respect for the temple and what it represented. The worship of his Father had to be kept clean!

³ Centuries later, after he was installed as Messianic King, Jesus again cleansed a temple—one that involves all today who want to worship Jehovah acceptably. What temple did he then cleanse?

Cleansing "the Sons of Levi"

⁴ As we saw in Chapter 2 of this publication, after being enthroned in 1914, Jesus came with his Father to inspect the *spiritual* temple—the arrangement for pure worship.^[2] As a result of that inspection, the King saw that anointed Christians, "the sons of Levi," needed some refining and cleansing. (Mal. 3:1-3) From 1914 to early 1919, the Refiner, Jehovah, allowed his people to go through various trials and hardships that served to refine and cleanse them. Happily, those anointed ones emerged from the fiery tests in a cleaner condition, eager to show their support for the Messianic King!

⁵ Was that the end of the refining and cleansing for God's people? No. Throughout the last days, Jehovah by means of the Messianic King has continued to help his followers to be clean so that they might remain in the spiritual temple. In the next two chapters, we will see how he has refined them morally and organizationally. First, though, let us discuss *spiritual* cleansing. It is faith-strengthening to consider what Jesus has done—both in clearly recognizable ways and behind the scenes—to help his followers to be spiritually clean.

“Keep Yourselves Clean”

⁶ What is spiritual cleanness? To answer that, let us examine the words that Jehovah spoke to Jewish exiles as they were about to leave Babylon in the sixth century B.C.E. (**Read Isaiah 52:11.**) Those exiles were returning home to Jerusalem primarily to rebuild the temple and restore true worship. (Ezra 1:2-4) Jehovah wanted his people to leave behind all traces of Babylon's religion. Notice that he gave them a series of commands: “Touch nothing unclean,” “get out from the midst of her,” and “keep yourselves clean.” Jehovah's pure worship must not be tainted by false worship. What, then, may we conclude? Spiritual cleanness involves keeping free of the teachings and practices of false religion.

⁷ Shortly after he was installed as King, Jesus put in place a clearly recognizable channel through which he has helped his followers to be spiritually clean. That channel is the faithful and discreet slave, which Christ appointed in 1919. (Matt. 24:45) By that year, the Bible Students had already cleansed themselves of many false religious teachings. Still, they needed some further cleansing spiritually. Through his faithful slave, Christ has gradually enlightened his followers about various observances and practices that they needed to abandon. (Prov. 4:18) Let us consider some examples of this.

Should Christians Celebrate Christmas?

⁸ The Bible Students long acknowledged that Christmas has pagan roots and that Jesus was not born on December 25. *Zion's Watch Tower* of December 1881 stated: “Millions were brought into the church from Paganism. But the change was mostly in name, for the pagan priests became christian priests and the pagan holidays came to be called by christian names—Christmas being one of these holidays.” In 1883, under the title “When Was Jesus Born?” the

6. How do Jehovah's commands to the Jewish exiles help us to understand what spiritual cleanness involves?

7. Through what channel has Jesus helped his followers to be spiritually clean?

8. What had the Bible Students long acknowledged about Christmas, yet what did they not see clearly?



The last time Christmas was celebrated at Brooklyn Bethel, 1926

9. What did the Bible Students come to realize about Christmas?

10. (a) What thorough exposé of Christmas was presented in December 1928? (See also the box “Christmas, Its Origin and Purpose.”) (b) How were God’s people alerted to other holidays and celebrations that should be avoided? (See the box “Exposing Other Holidays and Celebrations.”)

FOOTNOTE

[3] This article noted that a winter date for Jesus’ birth “does not comport well with the account of the shepherds being out with their flocks.” —Luke 2:8.

Watch Tower reasoned that Jesus was born about the beginning of October.^[3] Yet, the Bible Students did not at the time clearly see the need to stop celebrating Christmas. It continued to be celebrated even by members of the Brooklyn Bethel family. After 1926, however, things began to change. Why?

⁹ As a result of careful, closer scrutiny of the subject, the Bible Students came to realize that the origin of Christmas and the practices associated with it actually dishonor God. The article “The Origin of Christmas,” in *The Golden Age* of December 14, 1927, noted that Christmas is a pagan celebration, focuses on pleasures, and involves idol worship. The article made it clear that the celebration was not ordered by Christ and concluded with this pointed statement about Christmas: “The fact that the world, the flesh, and the Devil are in favor of its perpetuation and observance . . . is a final and conclusive argument against its celebration by those who are dedicated wholly to the service of Jehovah.” Not surprisingly, the Bethel family did not celebrate Christmas that December—or ever again!

¹⁰ The following year, the Bible Students received an even more thorough exposé of Christmas. On December 12, 1928, Brother Richard H. Barber, a member of the headquarters staff, gave a radio discourse that laid bare the

“CHRISTMAS, ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE”

IN December 1928, Brother Richard H. Barber (circled at left) delivered a powerful radio discourse on the subject of Christmas. The content of that discourse was published in *The Golden Age* of December 12, 1928, under the title “Christmas, Its Origin and Purpose.” Among the statements in the discourse were the following:

- “Satan . . . has taught the people to give more prominence to the *birth* of the

babe Jesus than to the *death* of the *man* Jesus, in order to hide the importance of the *ransom*.”

- “Every one is aware of the spirit of frivolity, debauchery, drunkenness and revelry so prevalent during the Christmas season . . . Surely none of these things honor either Jehovah God or His Son.”
- “The Devil has now succeeded in grafting his counterfeit festivals, feast days, fast days and holy days upon the church . . . The Devil has succeeded in getting the people to adopt all his wicked schemes and to give them the name Christian, in order that thus he might mock the great Jehovah God.”

unclean origins of this holiday. How did God’s people respond to the clear direction from headquarters? Recalling when he and his family stopped celebrating Christmas, Brother Charles Brandlein said: “Did we mind putting those pagan things away? Absolutely not! . . . It was just like taking a soiled garment off and throwing it away.” Reflecting a similar spirit, Brother Henry A. Cantwell, who later served as a traveling overseer, recalled: “We were pleased that we were able to give up something to prove our love for Jehovah.” Christ’s loyal followers were willing to make the needed changes and have no part in a celebration that stemmed from unclean worship.^[4]—John 15:19; 17:14.

¹¹ What a fine example those faithful Bible Students set for us! Reflecting on their example, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘How do I view the direction we receive from headquarters? Do I gratefully accept it and apply what I learn?’ Our willing obedience shows our support for the Messianic King, who is using the faithful slave to dispense timely spiritual food.—Acts 16:4, 5.

Should Christians Use the Cross?

¹² For many years, the Bible Students viewed the cross as an acceptable symbol of Christianity. They certainly did not feel that the cross should be worshipped, for they

11. How can we show our support for the Messianic King?

12. For many years, how did the Bible Students view the cross?

FOOTNOTE

[4] In a personal letter dated November 14, 1927, Brother Frederick W. Franz wrote: “We will have no Christmas this year. The Bethel family has voted not to have Christmas anymore.” A few months later, in a letter dated February 6, 1928, Brother Franz wrote: “Little by little the Lord is cleansing us from the errors of the Devil’s Babylonish organization.”

13. What enlightenment did Christ's followers receive about use of the cross? (See also the box "Progressively Enlightened About Use of the Cross.")
14. How did God's people respond to the progressive enlightenment they received about the cross?
- 15, 16. How can we show that we are determined to keep the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual temple clean?



Cross-and-crown emblem
(See paragraphs 12 and 13)

understood that idolatry is wrong. (1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:21) As early as 1883, the *Watch Tower* frankly stated that "all idolatry is an abomination to God." Yet, at first, the Bible Students saw no objection to what they thought were appropriate uses of the cross. For example, they proudly wore a cross-and-crown pin as an identifying badge. To them it signified that if they proved faithful to death, they would receive the crown of life. Beginning in 1891, a cross-and-crown symbol appeared on the cover of the *Watch Tower*.

¹³ The Bible Students cherished the cross-and-crown emblem. Starting in the late 1920's, however, Christ's followers were progressively enlightened regarding the use of the cross. Reflecting on the 1928 assembly held in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., Brother Grant Suiter, who later served on the Governing Body, recalled: "At the assembly the cross-and-crown emblems were shown to be not only unnecessary but objectionable." Over the next few years, more enlightenment followed. It was clear that the cross has no place in worship that is pure and spiritually clean.

¹⁴ How did God's people respond to the progressive enlightenment they received about the cross? Did they continue to hold on to the cross-and-crown emblem, which had been so dear to them? "We easily gave it up when we realized what it represented," recalled Lela Roberts, a long-time servant of Jehovah. Another faithful sister, Ursula Serenco, expressed the feelings of many, saying: "We came to recognize that what we once cherished as symbolic or representative of the death of our Lord and of our Christian devotion was really a pagan symbol. In harmony with Proverbs 4:18, we were grateful that the path was being more brightly illuminated." Christ's loyal followers wanted to have no part in unclean false religious practices!

¹⁵ We share that determination today. We recognize that Christ has been using a clearly recognizable channel—his faithful and discreet slave—to help his people keep spiritually clean. Hence, when the spiritual food we receive alerts us to observances, practices, or customs that are tainted by false religion, we promptly and obediently respond. Like our brothers and sisters who lived in the early part of Christ's presence, we are determined to keep the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual temple clean.

¹⁶ Throughout the last days, Christ has also been working behind the scenes to protect the congregations of Jehovah's people from individuals who could cause spiritual contamination. How has he done so? Let us see.

EXPOSING OTHER HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

OVER the years, Christ has helped his followers to remain no part of the world. Here are some of the earliest references that alerted God's people to various holidays and celebrations that true Christians avoid.

- **Easter.** "The prominent heathen festival of Easter was also brought over and engrafted into the so-called Christian church."—*The Golden Age*, December 12, 1928, page 168.
- **Valentine's Day.** "St. Valentine's Day has nothing very saintly to commend it as to its origin."—*The Golden Age*, December 25, 1929, page 208.
- **Birthdays.** "There are but two such celebrations mentioned in the Scriptures, one of the heathen king Pharaoh of Egypt, in the days of Joseph, and the other of [Herod,] whose birthday cost John the Baptist his life. In the Bible there is no instance of celebrations of birthdays by any of God's people."—*The Golden Age*, May 6, 1936, page 499.
- **New Year's Day.** "The whole New Year's celebration with its high jinks and drunken revelry is not Christian, regardless of the day on which it occurs. Early Christians did not observe it."—*Awake!* December 22, 1946, page 24.



PROGRESSIVELY ENLIGHTENED ABOUT USE OF THE CROSS

- Cross-and-crown pins are not only unnecessary but also objectionable.—Assembly in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., 1928.
- Cross-and-crown pins are idols.—*Preparation*, 1933, page 239.
- The cross is pagan in origin.—*The Golden Age*, February 28, 1934, page 336.
- Jesus died on a stake, not on a cross.—*The Golden Age*, November 4, 1936, page 72; *Riches*, 1936, page 27.

The Greek word *stau-ros'* is translated "cross" in many Bible translations. Notice, however, what various sources say about the meaning of this word:

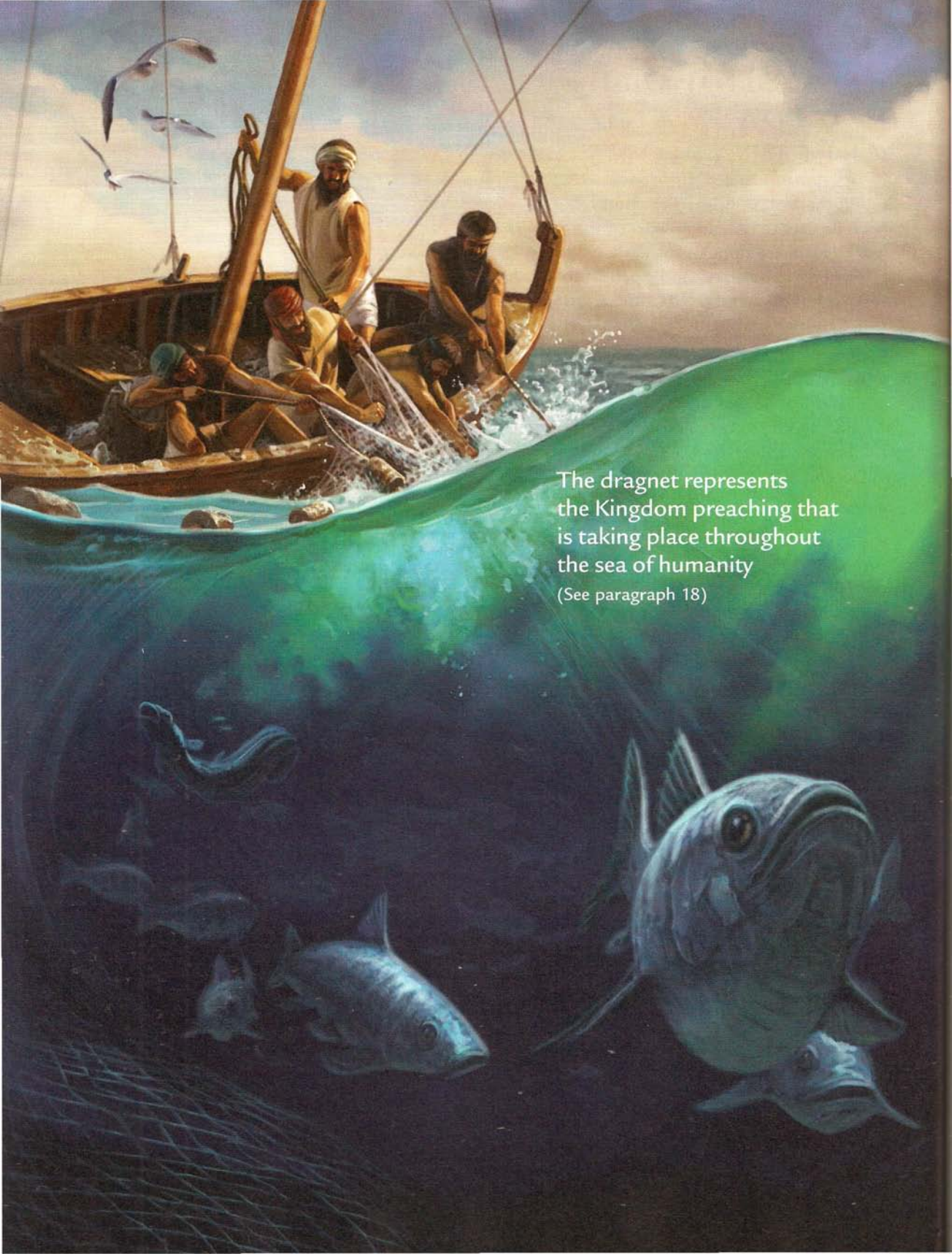
"The Greek word [*stau-ros'*] properly . . . means merely a stake."—*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

"A pole in the broadest sense. It is not the equivalent of a 'cross.'"—*Crucifixion in Antiquity*.

"A strong stake, such as farmers drive into the ground to make their fences or palisades—no more, no less."—*History of the Cross*.

"It never means two pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone."—*The Companion Bible*.

"An upright pale or stake . . . It never means two pieces of wood joining each other at any angle."—*A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*.



The dragnet represents
the Kingdom preaching that
is taking place throughout
the sea of humanity
(See paragraph 18)

Separating “the Wicked From Among the Righteous”

17 The King Jesus Christ keeps a watchful eye on the congregations of God’s people earth wide. In ways that we cannot fully perceive, Christ and the angels have been doing a separating work. Jesus described this work in his illustration of the dragnet. **(Read Matthew 13:47-50.)** What does the illustration mean?

18 Letting “a dragnet . . . down into the sea.” The dragnet represents the Kingdom preaching that is taking place throughout the sea of humanity. “Gathering fish of every kind.” The good news attracts people of all kinds—those who take steps to become true Christians, as well as many others who may initially show some interest but do not really take a stand for pure worship.^[5] Collecting “the fine ones into containers.” Honesthearted ones are gathered into containerlike congregations, where they can render clean worship to Jehovah. Throwing away “the unsuitable” fish. Throughout the last days, Christ and the angels have been separating “the wicked from among the righteous.”^[6] As a result, those who lack the right heart condition—who are perhaps unwilling to abandon wrong beliefs or practices—have not been allowed to taint the congregations.^[7]

19 Is it not reassuring to know that our King, Jesus Christ, is protective of those under his care? And is it not comforting to know that his zeal for true worship—and true worshippers—is as fervent today as it was when he cleansed the temple in the first century C.E.? How thankful we are that Christ has been working to safeguard the spiritual cleanness of God’s people and the purity of true worship! We can show our support for the King and his Kingdom by avoiding all contact with false religion.

17, 18. In the illustration of the dragnet, what is the meaning of (a) letting down the dragnet, (b) “gathering fish of every kind,” (c) collecting the fine fish into containers, and (d) throwing away the fish that were not suitable?

19. How do you feel about what Christ has been doing to safeguard the cleanness of God’s people and the purity of true worship?

FOOTNOTES

[5] Consider, for example, that in 2013, there was a peak of 7,965,954 publishers, while 19,241,252 attended the annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death.

[6] The separating of the fine fish from the unsuitable fish is *not* the same as the separating of the sheep from the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) The separating, or final judgment, of the sheep and the goats takes place during the coming great tribulation. Until then, those who are like unsuitable fish may return to Jehovah and be gathered into containerlike congregations.—Mal. 3:7.

[7] Eventually, the unsuitable ones will symbolically be cast into a fiery furnace, denoting their future destruction.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What is spiritual cleanness, and through what channel has Christ helped his followers to be spiritually clean?
- How did Christ use his faithful and discreet slave to help his followers to abandon the celebration of Christmas and the use of the cross-and-crown emblem?
- How do you feel about what Christ has done to safeguard true worship?

11

Moral Refinements Reflecting God's Holiness

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

How the King has taught his subjects to respect God's moral standards

1. What did Ezekiel see that fills us with awe?
2. (a) What does the visionary temple represent? (See also the footnote.)
(b) What may we learn from features of the temple's entrances?
3. Why have Christ's followers needed continual refinement?

FOOTNOTE

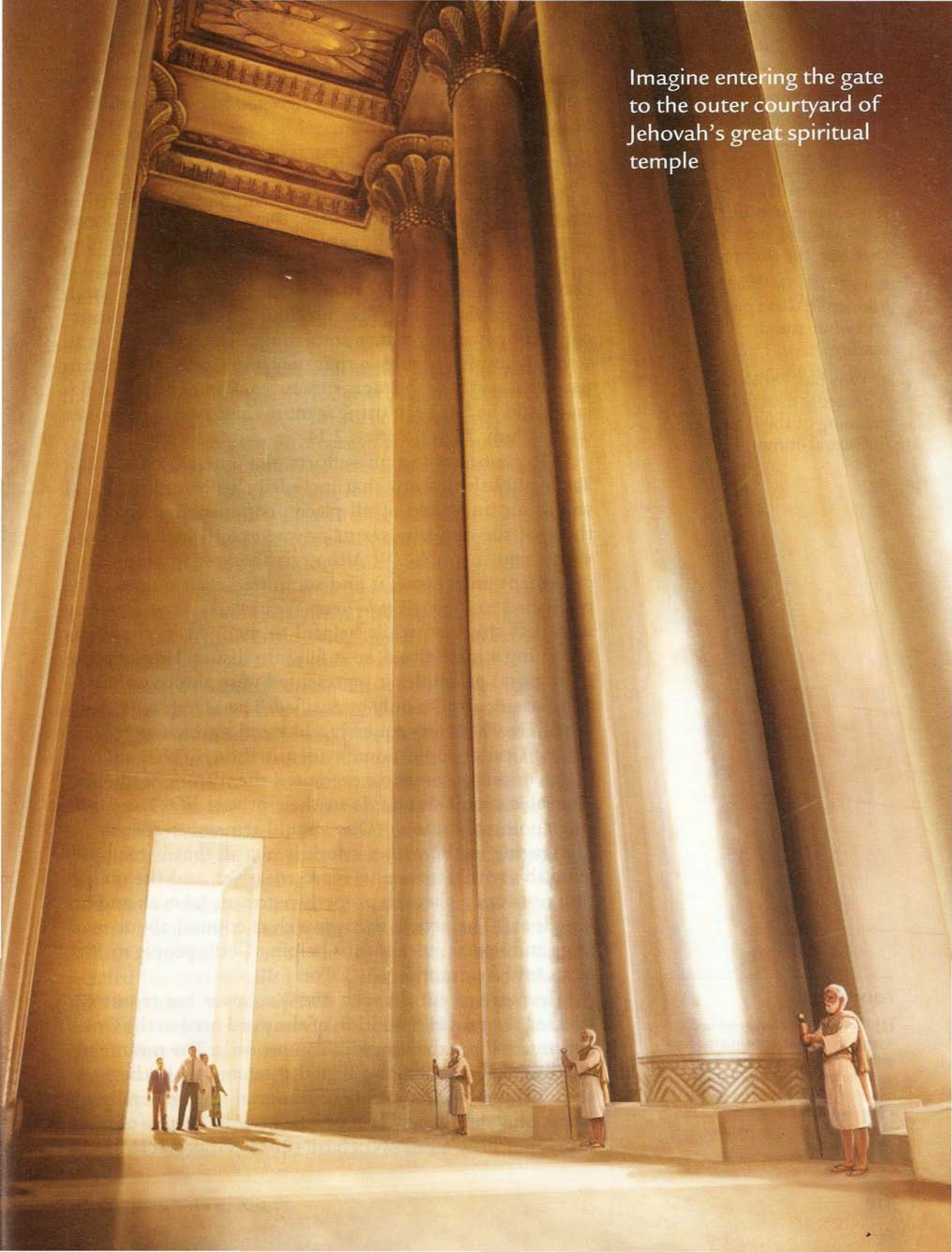
[1] In 1932, Volume 2 of the book *Vindication* first showed that the Bible prophecies focusing on the restoration of God's people to their homeland saw a modern-day fulfillment, not on fleshly Israel, but on *spiritual* Israel. Those prophecies point to the restoration of pure worship. *The Watchtower* of March 1, 1999, explained that Ezekiel's temple vision is such a restoration prophecy and therefore has an important spiritual fulfillment during the last days.

WHAT if you could have an experience like that of the prophet Ezekiel some 25 centuries ago? Imagine this: You approach a vast, gleaming temple complex. A mighty angel is there to show you this awesome place! You climb the seven steps that lead up to one of the three gates. These entrances fill you with awe. They tower upward about 100 feet. Within the entryways, you see that there are guard chambers. The pillars feature an elegant palm-tree design.—Ezek. 40:1-4, 10, 14, 16, 22; 41:20.

² This is the visionary spiritual temple. Ezekiel described it in such detail that his account fills chapters 40 through 48 of his prophetic book. This temple represents Jehovah's arrangement for pure worship. Every feature has meaning for our own worship in these last days.^[1] What do the lofty gates signify? They remind us that those who enter Jehovah's arrangement for pure worship must live by God's lofty and upright standards. Even the carvings of palm trees make a similar point, for palms are sometimes used in the Bible to stand for uprightness. (Ps. 92:12) And the guard chambers? Clearly, those who fail to respect divine standards are refused entrance into this beautiful, life-giving way of pure worship.—Ezek. 44:9.

³ How has Ezekiel's vision been fulfilled? As we noted in Chapter 2 of this book, Jehovah used Christ to put his people through a special refining process from 1914 to early 1919. Did the refining stop then? Far from it! Throughout the past century, Christ has continued to uphold Jehovah's holy standards of conduct. His followers have thus needed continual refinement. Why? Because Christ has been gathering his followers from this morally corrupt world and Satan never stops trying to draw them back into the mire of immorality. (**Read 2 Peter 2:20-22.**) Let us examine three areas in which true Christians have steadily been refined.

Imagine entering the gate
to the outer courtyard of
Jehovah's great spiritual
temple



4, 5. Satan has long used what tactic, and with what success?

6. What vow was published in the *Watch Tower*; how was it used, and why did it eventually fall into disuse? (See also the footnote.)

7. In 1935, *The Watchtower* addressed what problem, and what standard did it reaffirm?

8. Why has *The Watchtower* repeatedly stressed the full meaning of the Greek word for sexual immorality?

First, we will consider some moral refinements, then a vital provision for keeping the congregation clean, and finally the family arrangement.

Moral Refinements Through the Years

⁴ Jehovah's people have always been keenly interested in moral, upright conduct. Hence, they have embraced ever clearer instruction on the subject. Consider a few examples.

⁵ **Sexual immorality.** Jehovah designed sexual relations between marriage mates to be clean and beautiful. Satan delights in wrenching that precious gift from its proper context by twisting it into something dirty and using it to tempt Jehovah's people so that they lose God's favor. Satan used that tactic with tragic success back in the days of Balaam, and he has been using it more than ever in these last days.—Num. 25:1-3, 9; Rev. 2:14.

⁶ To counteract Satan's efforts, the June 15, 1908, *Watch Tower* published a vow that included this commitment: "I will at all times and at all places, conduct myself toward those of the opposite sex in private exactly as I would do with them in public."^[2] Although the vow was not a requirement, many took it and submitted their names to be published in *Zion's Watch Tower*. Years later, it was rightly seen that this vow, while helpful to many in its time, was becoming a mere ritual; so it fell into disuse. However, the high moral principles it represented were always upheld.

⁷ Satan's attacks only intensified. The March 1, 1935, issue of *The Watchtower* squarely addressed a growing problem among God's people. Some evidently thought that sharing in the ministry somehow exempted them from holding to Jehovah's moral standards in their private life. *The Watchtower* pointedly stated: "One should remember that merely engaging in the witness work is not all that is required. Jehovah's witnesses are his representatives, and the obligation rests upon them to properly represent Jehovah and his kingdom." The article then gave clear counsel about marriage and sexual morals, thus helping God's people to "flee from sexual immorality."—1 Cor. 6:18.

⁸ In more recent decades, *The Watchtower* has repeatedly stressed the proper definition of the word used in the Greek Scriptures for sexual immorality—*por-nei'a*. The meaning is not limited to the act of sexual intercourse. Rather, *por-nei'a* includes a wide variety of immoral acts, generally encompassing all the lewd acts carried out in houses of prostitution. Christ's followers have thus been protected from

FOOTNOTE

[2] The vow prohibited a man and a woman from being alone in a room together unless the door was left wide open—or unless they were marriage mates or close family members. For some years, this vow was recited daily as part of the Morning Worship program at Bethel.

the plague of sexual perversion that has overtaken so many in today's world.—**Read Ephesians 4:17-19.**

9 Alcohol abuse. The March 1, 1935, issue of *The Watchtower* raised another moral issue: "It has likewise been noticed that some take part in the field service and perform other duties in the organization while under the influence of [alcohol]. Under what condition is the use of wine approved in the Scriptures? Would it be proper to use wine to the extent that it affects one's service in the Lord's organization?"

10 The answer discussed the balanced view of alcoholic beverages that is found in God's Word. The Bible does not condemn the use of wine and other alcoholic drinks in moderation, but it does strongly condemn drunkenness. (Ps. 104:14, 15; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) As to taking part in sacred service while under the influence of alcohol, God's servants have long been reminded of the account about Aaron's sons, whom God put to death for offering illegitimate fire upon God's altar. Shortly thereafter, the account reveals what likely led those men to doing something so inappropriate, for God gave a law forbidding all the priests to use alcohol while engaged in their sacred duties. (Lev. 10:1, 2, 8-11) Applying that underlying principle today, Christ's followers are careful to avoid being under the influence of alcohol while taking part in their sacred service.

11 In more recent decades, Christ's followers have been further blessed with increased understanding about alcoholism, a condition involving persistent, addictive misuse of alcohol. Thanks to timely spiritual food, many have been helped to handle that condition appropriately and regain control of their lives. Many more have been helped to avoid the problem altogether. None need to allow alcohol abuse to rob them of their dignity, their family and, above all, their privilege of engaging in pure worship of Jehovah.

12 Use of tobacco. Christ's servants began taking a dim view of the use of tobacco even before the last days began. A number of years ago, an elderly brother, Charles Capen, recalled his first meeting with Charles Taze Russell late in the 19th century. Capen, then 13 years old, and three of his brothers were on the staircase of the Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. As Russell passed them, he inquired: "Are you boys smoking? I smell tobacco smoke." They assured him that they were not smoking. Surely they were left with no doubts about his views on the subject. In the *Watch Tower* of August 1, 1895, Brother Russell commented on

9, 10. (a) What moral issue did *The Watchtower* address in 1935? (b) What is the Bible's balanced teaching on the use of alcohol?

11. Why has it been a blessing for God's people to receive increased understanding about alcoholism?

12. How did Christ's servants view the use of tobacco even before the last days began?

13. What moral refinement came in 1973?

14. What is God's standard regarding blood, and how did the practice of blood transfusion become commonplace?

15, 16. (a) Jehovah's Witnesses took what stand regarding blood transfusion? (b) What support has been provided to Christ's followers regarding transfusions and nonblood management, and with what result?

“We cannot imagine our Lord reeking with the fumes of tobacco or putting into his mouth anything defiling.”

—C. T. Russell

2 Corinthians 7:1, saying: “I cannot see how it would be to God's glory, or to his own profit, for any Christian to use tobacco in any form. . . . We cannot imagine our Lord reeking with the fumes of tobacco or putting into his mouth anything defiling.”

¹³ In 1935, *The Watchtower* called tobacco “the filthy weed” and noted that no one who chose to chew it or smoke it could remain a member of the Bethel family or serve as a representative of God's organization in the pioneer work or the traveling ministry. In 1973 a further moral refinement came. *The Watchtower* of June 1 explained that no Witness of Jehovah could remain in good standing in the congregation while carrying on this death-dealing, defiling, and unloving practice. Those who refused to give up the misuse of tobacco were to be disfellowshipped.^[3] Christ had taken another important step in refining his followers.

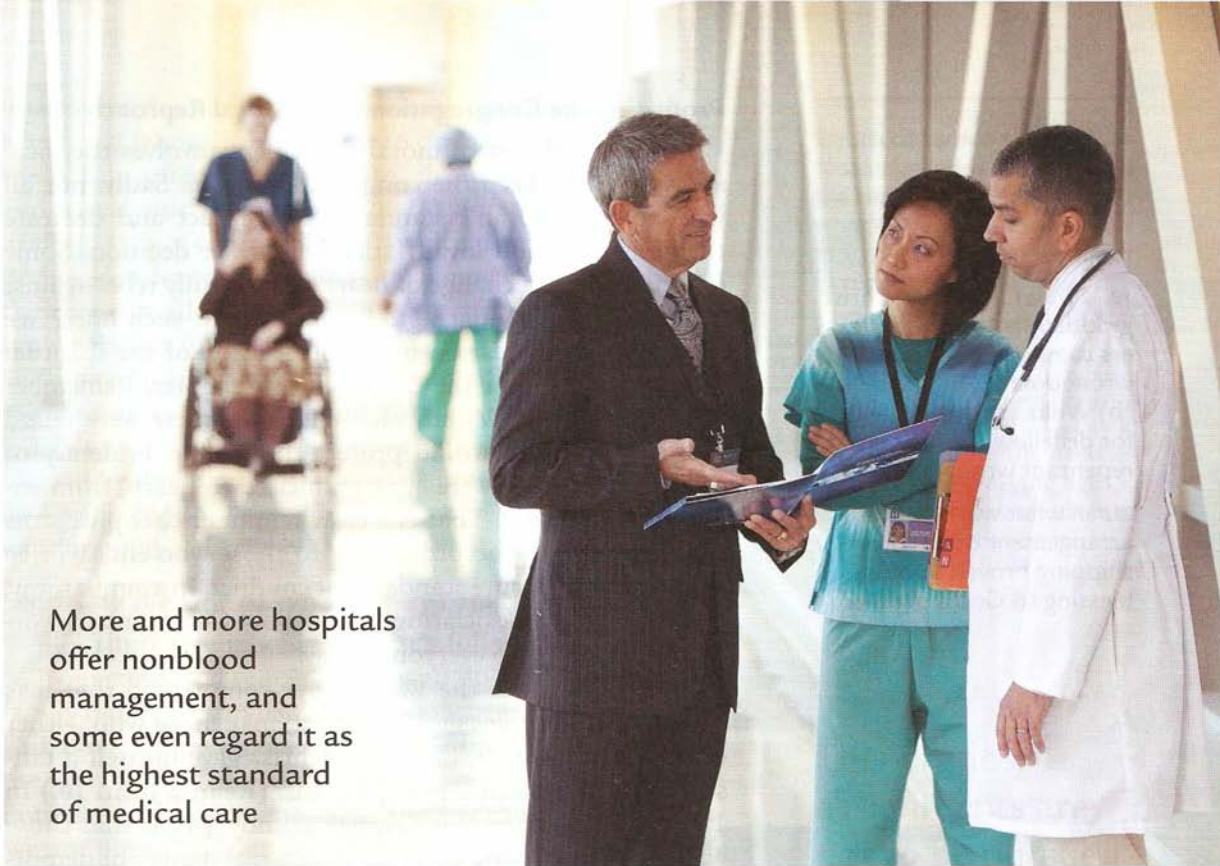
¹⁴ **Misuse of blood.** In Noah's day, God stated that it would be wrong to eat blood. He reaffirmed that position in the Law to the nation of Israel, and he similarly directed the Christian congregation to “abstain . . . from blood.” (Acts 15:20, 29; Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26) Not surprisingly, Satan found a way in modern times to cause many to disregard this divine standard. Doctors were experimenting with blood transfusion in the 19th century, but after blood types were discovered, the practice became more widespread. In 1937, blood began to be collected and stored in blood banks, and then World War II gave the practice a big push. Soon, transfusions became commonplace around the world.

¹⁵ As early as 1944, *The Watchtower* indicated that receiving a blood transfusion was really another way of eating blood. The following year, that Scriptural position was strengthened and clarified. By 1951, a list of questions and answers was published to help God's people deal with medical professionals. Around the world, Christ's faithful followers were taking a courageous stand, often in the face of scorn, hostility, and even outright persecution. But Christ kept moving his organization to provide the needed support. Detailed and well-researched brochures and articles were published.

¹⁶ In 1979, some elders began to visit hospitals in order to help doctors to understand better our position, the Scriptural reasons for it, and the availability of alternatives to blood. In 1980, elders in 39 cities in the United States received specialized training in this work. In time, the Governing Body gave approval for the establishment

FOOTNOTE

[3] The misuse of tobacco includes smoking it, chewing it, or cultivating it for such uses.



More and more hospitals offer nonblood management, and some even regard it as the highest standard of medical care

of Hospital Liaison Committees all over the world. Have these efforts made any headway over the years? Today, many tens of thousands of medical professionals—including doctors, surgeons, and anesthesiologists—are cooperating with Witness patients, showing respect for our choice of non-blood management. More and more hospitals offer non-blood management, and some even regard it as the highest standard of medical care. Is it not thrilling to think of the ways Jesus has protected his followers from Satan's efforts to pollute them?—**Read Ephesians 5:25-27.**

¹⁷ We do well to ask ourselves, 'Do we value the way Christ has been refining his followers, training us to adhere to Jehovah's lofty moral standards?' If so, then let us keep in mind that Satan is ever seeking to alienate us from Jehovah and Jesus by eroding our respect for godly morals. To counter that influence, Jehovah's organization consistently provides loving warnings and reminders about the immoral ways of this world. Let us remain alert, responsive, and obedient to such helpful counsel.—Prov. 19:20.

17. How may we show that we value the way that Christ has been refining his followers?

18. When it comes to those who willfully rebel against God's standards, Ezekiel's vision gives us what clear reminder?

19, 20. (a) How has Christ gradually helped his followers to refine the way serious wrongdoing is handled? (b) What are three reasons for disfellowshipping unrepentant wrongdoers?

21. In what way has the arrangement of disfellowshipping proved to be a blessing to God's people?

Protecting the Congregation From Moral Reproach

18 A second area of moral refinement involves the measures taken to keep the congregation clean. Sadly, not all who accept Jehovah's standards of conduct and dedicate themselves to God loyally stick with their decision. Some eventually have a change of heart and willfully rebel against those standards. What is to be done about such ones? We may find one indication in Ezekiel's vision of the spiritual temple discussed at the outset of this chapter. Remember those lofty gates. Within each entryway, there were guard chambers. Guards would protect the temple, evidently to prevent those who were "uncircumcised in heart" from entering. (Ezek. 44:9) That is a clear reminder that pure worship is a privilege accorded only to those who endeavor to live by Jehovah's pure standards of conduct. In a similar way, the privilege of associating with fellow Christians in worship is not open to everyone today.

19 Back in 1892, the *Watch Tower* commented that it is "our duty to *disfellowship* (as Christians) those who, either directly or indirectly, deny that Christ gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price] for all." (**Read 2 John 10.**) In 1904, the book *The New Creation* acknowledged that those who persist in wrong conduct pose a real danger of demoralizing the congregation. Back then, the entire congregation would participate in "church trials" to examine cases of serious wrongdoing. However, such occasions were rare. In 1944, *The Watchtower* showed that only responsible brothers should handle such matters. In 1952 a Bible-based procedure for handling judicial matters was published in *The Watchtower*, highlighting a key reason for disfellowshipping unrepentant ones—to keep the congregation clean.

20 In the decades since then, Christ has helped his followers to clarify and refine the handling of serious cases of wrongdoing. Christian elders are carefully trained to care for judicial matters in Jehovah's way, with a proper balance of justice and mercy. Today we see clearly at least three reasons for taking the action of disfellowshipping an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation: (1) to keep Jehovah's name free from reproach, (2) to protect the congregation from the contaminating effects of serious sin, and (3) to move a wrongdoer to repentance if that is possible.

21 Do you see how the arrangement of disfellowshipping has proved to be a blessing to Christ's followers today? In ancient Israel, wrongdoers often became a corrupting in-

fluence on the nation, at times even outnumbering those who loved Jehovah and sought to do what was right. Thus, the nation often brought reproach upon Jehovah's name and lost divine favor. (Jer. 7:23-28) But today, Jehovah is dealing with a community of spiritual men and women. Because hardened wrongdoers are removed from our midst, they are not allowed to become, in effect, weapons in Satan's hand to inflict further damage on the congregation and its clean standing. Rather, their influence is kept to a minimum. As a group, we are thus assured of keeping Jehovah's favor. Remember, Jehovah promised: "No weapon formed against you will have any success." (Isa. 54:17) Do we loyally support the elders, who bear the heavy load of handling judicial cases?

Glorifying the One to Whom Every Family Owes Its Name

²² A third area in which Christ's followers have benefited from continual refinement has to do with marriage and family life. Has our view of the family been refined over the years? Yes. For example, when we read of God's servants in the early part of the 20th century, we cannot help but be impressed and even amazed at their spirit of self-sacrifice. We are profoundly grateful for the way they put their sacred service above all else in life. At the same time, though, we can readily see that more balance was needed. How so?

²³ It was not uncommon for brothers to undertake assignments in the ministry or the traveling work that took them far from home for many months at a time. Marriage was, at times, discouraged with more force than the Scriptures warrant, while relatively little was said about how to build strong Christian marriages. Do the same conditions prevail among Christ's followers today? Hardly!

²⁴ Today, theocratic assignments are not to be pursued at the expense of family obligations. (**Read 1 Timothy 5:8.**) Further, Christ has ensured that his faithful followers on earth receive a steady stream of helpful, balanced Scriptural counsel regarding marriage and family life. (Eph. 3:14, 15) In 1978, the book *Making Your Family Life Happy* appeared. Some 18 years later came the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*. Moreover, *The Watchtower* has featured numerous articles designed to help married couples apply Scriptural principles in their relationship.

²⁵ And what about young ones? Through the years, their needs have received more and more attention. Jehovah's

22, 23. Why are we grateful to our fellow Christians of the early 20th century, yet what evidence is there that more balance was needed in regard to the family?

24. How did Christ help his faithful people to gain a more balanced view of marriage and the family?

25-27. How have the needs of children of varying ages received ever greater attention through the years?

Theocratic assignments are not to be pursued at the expense of family obligations



The brochure *My Bible Lessons* was received with joy at this convention in Germany

organization has long provided good things for children of varying ages, but what was once a trickle has become a full, steady stream. For example, the “Juvenile Bible Study” feature appeared in *The Golden Age* from 1919 to 1921. After that came *The Golden Age ABC* brochure in 1920 and the book *Children* in 1941. In the 1970’s, the books *Listening to the Great Teacher*, *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*, and *My Book of Bible Stories* were provided. In 1982, the *Awake!* series “Young People Ask” began, leading to the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published in 1989.

²⁶ Today, we have two up-to-date volumes of *Young People Ask*, while the series continues on our Web site, jw.org. We also have the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. Our Web site has plenty of features for the young, including Bible-character cards, Bible study activities for older and younger children, puzzles, videos, and illustrated Bible sto-

ries, as well as Bible lessons for children aged three and under. Clearly, Christ's view of young ones has not changed since he gathered the young children into his arms back in the first century. (Mark 10:13-16) He wants the young ones among us to feel beloved and well-fed spiritually.

²⁷ Jesus also wants children to be protected from harm. As this morally degraded world has sunk deeper into depravity, the plague of child abuse has become more prevalent. Therefore, clear and direct material has been published to help parents keep their children safe from this vicious practice.^[4]

²⁸ Is it not thrilling to contemplate how Christ has continued to refine his followers, training them to respect, live by, and benefit from Jehovah's lofty moral standards? Think again about the temple that Ezekiel saw in vision. Remember the lofty entrances. True, that temple is, not a physical place, but a spiritual one. Nevertheless, do we see it as real? We enter into it, not just by going to a Kingdom Hall or by opening a Bible or by ringing a doorbell in the ministry. Those are physical acts involving tangible things. A hypocrite could do those things without ever entering Jehovah's temple. However, if we do such things while at the same time living by Jehovah's exalted moral standards and taking part in pure worship with the right heart attitude, we have entered into and are serving in that most sacred of places—the arrangement for the pure worship of Jehovah God! Let us always cherish that precious privilege. Let us also keep doing our utmost to reflect Jehovah's holiness by upholding his righteous standards!

-
28. (a) What is required if we are to engage in pure worship, as illustrated by Ezekiel's temple vision?
(b) What are you determined to do?

FOOTNOTE

[4] For example, see chapter 32 of *Learn From the Great Teacher*; also see pages 3-11 of the October 2007 issue of *Awake!*

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- In what ways has Christ refined his followers as regards morals?
- How have Kingdom subjects been protected from the influence of willful wrongdoers?
- How has God's organization given ever greater attention to marriage and the family?
- Why should we be determined to adhere to the lofty moral standards required of pure worshippers?

12

Organized to Serve “the God of Peace”

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Jehovah progressively
organizes his people

1, 2. What change did *Zion's Watch Tower* undergo in January 1895, and how did the brothers react?

3, 4. What problem was addressed in the *Watch Tower* of November 15, 1895, and what far-reaching change was announced?

WHEN zealous Bible Student John A. Bohnet received his copy of *Zion's Watch Tower* of January 1895, he was thrilled by what he saw. The magazine had a bold new cover—an illustration of a lighthouse towering over a stormy sea, sweeping its beams of light across a dark sky. The announcement in the magazine about the new design was entitled “Our New Dress.”

² Impressed, Brother Bohnet sent a letter to Brother Russell. “Glad to see the TOWER out on Dress Parade,” he wrote. “It looks nice.” Another faithful Bible Student, John H. Brown, wrote about the cover: “It is very striking. How firm a foundation the tower stands upon, while those waves and storms beat upon it.” That new cover was the first change our brothers saw that year—but it was not the last. In November they learned of yet another major change. Significantly, again it involved a stormy sea.

³ An extensive article published in the *Watch Tower* of November 15, 1895, laid bare a problem: Stormy waves of trouble were disrupting the peace in the association, or organization, of Bible Students. Brothers increasingly argued about who should be the leader in the local congregation. To help the brothers see what was needed to correct that divisive spirit of rivalry, the article compared the organization to a ship. Then it candidly admitted that those taking the lead had failed to prepare the shiplike organization for stormy weather. What had to be done?

⁴ The article noted that a capable captain makes sure that life preservers are aboard and that the crew is ready to batten down the hatches when a storm is coming. Similarly, those leading the organization needed to make sure that all congregations were prepared to handle stormy conditions. To accomplish that, the article announced a far-reaching change. It directed that starting immediately, “in

every company, elders be chosen” to “take the oversight of the flock.”—Acts 20:28.

⁵ That first elder arrangement signified a timely step forward in establishing a stable congregation structure. It helped our brothers to navigate through the raging waves stirred up by World War I. In the decades that followed, further organizational improvements helped God’s people to become better equipped to serve Jehovah. What Bible prophecy foretold this development? What organizational changes have you witnessed? How have you benefited from them?

“I Will Appoint Peace as Your Overseers”

⁶ As we considered in Chapter 9, Isaiah foretold that Jehovah would bless his people with an increase in numbers. (Isa. 60:22) However, Jehovah promised to do even more. In the same prophecy, he stated: “Instead of the copper I will bring in gold, and instead of the iron I will bring in silver, instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stones, iron; and I will appoint peace as your overseers and righteousness as your task assigners.” (Isa. 60:17) What does that prophecy mean? How does it apply to us today?

⁷ Isaiah’s prophecy states that one material would be replaced by another. But note that the replacements are changes, not from bad to good, but from good to better. Replacing copper with gold is an improvement, and the same is true of the other materials here mentioned. Thus, with this word picture, Jehovah foretold that the condition of his people would improve step-by-step. To what sort of improvement does the prophecy refer? By mentioning “overseers” and “task assigners,” Jehovah indicated that gradual improvements would come in the way his people were cared for and organized.

⁸ Who causes this organizational progress? Jehovah states: “I will bring in gold, . . . I will bring in silver, . . . and I will appoint peace.” Indeed, improvements in congregation organization have been brought about, not by human efforts, but by Jehovah himself. And ever since Jesus was installed as King, Jehovah has brought about these improvements by means of his Son. How do we benefit from these changes? The same scripture states that these improvements will result in “peace” and “righteousness.” As we accept God’s guidance and make adjustments, peace prevails among us and love of righteousness moves us to serve Jehovah, whom the apostle Paul described as “the God of peace.”—Phil. 4:9.

5. (a) Why was the first elder arrangement a timely step forward? (b) What questions will we consider?

6, 7. (a) What is the meaning of Isaiah 60:17? (b) What does the mention of “overseers” and “task assigners” indicate?

8. (a) The improvements mentioned in Isaiah’s prophecy are caused by whom? (b) How do we benefit from the improvements? (See also the box “He Humbly Accepted Correction.”)

The replacements are changes, not from bad to good, but from good to better

9. What is the proper foundation for order and unity in the congregation, and why?

10. (a) What improvements occurred in our organization during the early years? (See the box “How the Manner of Oversight Improved.”) (b) What questions will now be considered?

11. (a) A study of the Scriptures led to what adjustment in understanding? (b) What were the brothers of the governing body determined to do?

12. (a) What adjustment was made within the governing body? (b) Describe how the Governing Body is now organized. (See the box “How the Governing Body Cares for Kingdom Interests,” page 130.)

⁹ Regarding Jehovah, Paul also wrote: “God is a God *not of disorder but of peace.*” (1 Cor. 14:33) Note that Paul did not contrast disorder with order, but he contrasted it with peace. Why? Consider this: Order in itself does not invariably result in peaceful conditions. For example, a group of soldiers may march in an orderly way toward the front lines, but their orderly advance results in war, not peace. Hence, as Christians, we want to keep a key fact in mind: Any structure of order that does not have peace as its foundation will sooner or later collapse. In contrast, godly peace promotes the kind of order that lasts. Therefore, how grateful we are that our organization is guided and refined by “the God who gives peace”! (Rom. 15:33) God-given peace forms the foundation for the beneficial order and the heartfelt unity that we enjoy and appreciate so much in our congregations worldwide.—Ps. 29:11.

¹⁰ The box “How the Manner of Oversight Improved” gives an overview of the beneficial and orderly changes that occurred in our organization during the early years. But what changes ‘from copper to gold’ has Jehovah brought about more recently through our King? How have those adjustments in oversight fortified the peace and unity of the congregations worldwide? How are they helping you personally to serve “the God of peace”?

How Christ Leads the Congregation

¹¹ From 1964 to 1971, the governing body supervised an extensive Bible study project that examined, among many other subjects, how the first-century Christian congregation functioned.^[1] As to organization structure, it was learned that the oversight of congregations in the first century was carried out by a body of elders instead of just by one elder, or overseer. (**Read Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 4:14.**) When that point was better understood, the governing body realized that their King, Jesus, was guiding them in making improvements in the organizational structure of God’s people—and the brothers of the governing body were determined to yield to the King’s direction. They promptly made adjustments to bring the organization into fuller harmony with the elder arrangement set out in the Scriptures. What are some adjustments that were made in the early 1970’s?

¹² The first adjustment applied to the governing body itself. Until that time, that group of anointed brothers was made up of the seven members of the board of directors of

FOOTNOTE

[1] The results of that extensive research were published in the reference work *Aid to Bible Understanding*.

HE HUMBLY ACCEPTED CORRECTION

THE Finnish edition of *The Watch Tower* of April 1, 1916, contained a letter from Brother Russell directed to a few brothers in Scandinavia, including Brother Kaarlo Harteva. Brother Russell wrote to them: "We encourage all of you, dear brothers in the faith, to return to the truth and the work that belongs to this era." Why did Brother Russell make this appeal?

Brother Harteva, who was born in 1882, was one of the first Bible Students in Finland. He was baptized in April 1910, and in the summer of 1912, Brother Russell authorized him to publish *The Watch Tower* in Finnish. All went well until World War I broke out. Brother Harteva wrote in the December 1, 1914, issue of *The Watch Tower*: "Because of the difficult economic situation, . . . we cannot promise that *The Watch Tower* will have the same number of pages or will be published as often this year." However, in 1915, to raise funds, Brother Harteva and others founded a cooperative association called Ararat, which began to publish a magazine by that name.

As Brother Harteva focused his attention on the new association and the new magazine, another brother began to serve as editor of the Finnish *Watch Tower*. *Ararat* magazine published Biblical articles but also articles on such topics as natural cures and the newly invented language Esperanto. Before long, the new magazine distracted the brothers from the clear teachings of truth. At that point, Brother Russell, out of concern for their spiritual welfare, appealed to Brother Harteva and others to "return to the truth."

How did Brother Harteva react? He published Brother Russell's letter in *Ararat* magazine, together with his own reply. Brother Harteva



Kaarlo Harteva

apologized for his actions and stated: "If I may correct the matter, I want to do what I can." Shortly thereafter, in the last issue of *Ararat* magazine, Brother Harteva again apologized for the confusion he had caused and added: "I will try to be more careful with regard to every aspect of the present truth." Unlike some of the proud elected elders of those days, Kaarlo Harteva humbly accepted correction.

Later, Brother Harteva was again appointed as the editor of *The Watch Tower* in Finnish and as branch overseer. He continued to take care of those responsibilities until 1950. He finished his earthly course in 1957, faithful to Jehovah and to the truth. Indeed, those who humbly accept correction from their King, Jesus, are refined and receive Jehovah's blessing.

13. (a) What arrangement had been in effect for 40 years? (b) What did the Governing Body do in 1972?

14. (a) What new arrangement went into effect on October 1, 1972? (b) How does the coordinator of a body of elders apply the counsel found at Philippians 2:3?

the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. However, in 1971, the governing body was enlarged from 7 to 11 members and was no longer identified with the board of directors. The members considered themselves equals and started an annual rotation of the chairmanship in alphabetical order.

¹³ The next adjustment affected each congregation. In what way? From 1932 to 1972, congregation oversight had been carried out mainly by one brother. Until 1936, such an appointed brother was called the service director. Thereafter, the name was changed to company servant, then to congregation servant, and finally to congregation overseer. Those appointed brothers cared zealously for the spiritual welfare of the flock. The congregation overseer usually made decisions for the congregation without consulting other servants in the congregation. However, during the year 1972, the Governing Body prepared the way for a historic change. What did that change involve?

¹⁴ Instead of having one brother serve as the congregation overseer in each congregation, other brothers who were Scripturally qualified would now also be theocratical-

HOW THE MANNER OF OVERSIGHT IMPROVED

"We voted for the elders by raising the right hand. Then, a brother walked up the aisle counting the votes."—Sister Rose Swingle, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.



ly appointed to serve as Christian elders. Together they would form a body of elders that would oversee the local congregation. That new elder arrangement went into effect on October 1, 1972. Today the coordinator of a body of elders views himself, not as a first among equals, but “as a lesser one.” (Luke 9:48) What a blessing such humble brothers are for the worldwide brotherhood!—Phil. 2:3.

¹⁵ The arrangement of sharing congregation responsibility among members of bodies of elders has proved to be a great improvement. Consider these three benefits: First and foremost, the arrangement helps all elders—no matter how weighty their congregation responsibilities—to be very conscious that Jesus is the Head of the congregation. (Eph. 5:23) Second, as Proverbs 11:14 states: “There is success through many advisers.” As elders consult together on matters that affect the spiritual well-being of the congregation and consider one another’s suggestions, they are helped to reach decisions that harmonize with Bible principles. (Prov. 27:17) Jehovah blesses such decisions, and these lead to success. Third, by having more qualified brothers serve as elders, the organization has been able to keep up with

15. (a) The arrangement for congregations to have a body of elders has yielded what benefits? (b) What shows that our King acted with foresight?

Clearly, with foresight, our King provided his followers with the needed shepherds at the right time

1881—To establish contacts among Bible Students living in the same area, Brother Russell asks those who regularly hold meetings to inform the Watch Tower office where they meet.

1895—All congregations are instructed to choose from among themselves brothers who can serve as elders.

1919—In each congregation a service director is appointed theocratically by the branch office. His responsibilities include organizing the preaching work and encouraging participation in the field ministry. Some of the congregation elders do not support the arrangement of having a service director.

1932—The annual election of elders by the congregation is eliminated. Instead, the congregation elects a service committee made up of brothers who zealously share in the preaching work and who live up to the newly adopted name Jehovah’s *Witnesses*. One of their number, nominated by the congregation, is appointed by the Society or branch office to be the service director.

1937—Brothers who are part of the great crowd can serve on service committees alongside their anointed brothers.

1938—Congregations adopt a resolution requesting that all congregation servants be appointed theocratically. This marks the end of democratic elections in the congregations.

To learn more about historical developments in organizational structure, see *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, pages 204-235.

16. (a) What responsibility do elders have? (b) How did the Bible Students view Jesus' admonition to 'shepherd the sheep'?

17. How have overseers been helped to become capable shepherds?

the growing need for oversight and shepherding care within the congregations. (Isa. 60:3-5) Just think of it—the number of congregations worldwide increased from over 27,000 in 1971 to more than 113,000 in 2013! Clearly, with foresight, our King has provided the needed shepherds for his followers at the right time.—Mic. 5:5.

“Becoming Examples to the Flock”

¹⁶ Back in the early days of the Bible Students, the elders already understood that they had a responsibility to help fellow believers to remain servants of God. (**Read Galatians 6:10.**) In 1908, an article in the *Watch Tower* considered Jesus' admonition: “Shepherd my little sheep.” (John 21:15-17) The article told elders: “It is very important that the Master's commission in respect to the flock shall have a prominent place in our hearts, that we shall rightly esteem it a great privilege to feed and to tend the Lord's followers.” In 1925, *The Watch Tower* again emphasized the importance of serving as shepherds by reminding elders: “The church of God is his own, . . . and he will hold all responsible for their privilege of serving their brethren.”

¹⁷ How has Jehovah's organization helped elders to turn their shepherding skills from ‘iron into silver’? By providing training. In 1959, the first Kingdom Ministry School for overseers was held. One class session considered the subject “Giving Personal Attention.” Those responsible brothers were encouraged to “work out a schedule for visiting publishers in their homes.” The session presented various ways in which shepherds could make such visits up-

Kingdom Ministry School in the Philippines, 1966



“WE WERE AMAZED”

A MISSIONARY couple in Asia were assigned to a congregation that had not seen growth in many years. They noticed that the local brothers were loving but did not follow organizational instructions. After the missionaries had developed friendships with the publishers, the missionary brother set out step-by-step to bring the congregation structure in line with the way Jehovah's people are organized world-

wide. What was the result? Within two years, meeting attendance doubled, new ones began to share in the preaching work, and more than 20 got baptized. “We were amazed,” recount the couple. “Jehovah blessed us superabundantly! Seeing the results of applying the instructions of God's organization has given joy to all in the congregation.”

building. In 1966, an updated Kingdom Ministry School began. It considered the subject “Importance of the Shepherding Work.” What was the main point of that class session? Those taking the lead “should share in providing loving care for the flock of God, while not failing to give due attention to their own households and to the field ministry.” In recent years, more schools for elders have been held. What has been the result of the continuing training that Jehovah's organization has provided? Today, the Christian congregation has thousands of qualified brothers who serve as spiritual shepherds.

18 Christian elders have been put in place by Jehovah through our King, Jesus, to carry out a weighty task. What is it? To lead God's sheep through the most critical time in human history. (Eph. 4:11, 12; 2 Tim. 3:1) Jehovah and Jesus have deep affection for hardworking elders because these brothers obey the Scriptural admonition: “Shepherd the flock of God under your care . . . willingly . . . , eagerly . . . , becoming examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Let us consider two of the many ways in which Christian shepherds are examples to the flock and greatly contribute to peace and joy in the congregation.

How Elders Today Shepherd the Flock of God

19 First, elders work with members of the congregation. The Gospel writer Luke stated about Jesus: “He traveled from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the Kingdom of God. And the Twelve were *with* him.” (Luke 8:1) Just as Jesus preached

18. (a) With what weighty responsibility have elders been entrusted? (b) Why do Jehovah and Jesus have affection for hardworking elders?

19. How do we feel about elders who accompany us in the ministry?



As a shepherd searches for
a lost sheep, so elders strive
to find those who have lost
contact with the congregation

alongside his apostles, so exemplary elders today work side by side with their fellow believers in the preaching work. They realize that by doing so, they contribute much to the wholesome spirit of the congregation. How do congregation members feel about such elders? Jeannine, a sister in her late 80's, notes: "Working together with an elder in field service gives me a fine opportunity to converse with him and to get to know him better." Steven, a brother in his mid-30's, says: "When an elder works with me in the door-to-door ministry, I feel he wants to help me. Receiving such help gives me much joy."

²⁰ Second, Jehovah's organization has trained elders to show concern for those who have lost contact with the congregation. (Heb. 12:12) Why should elders help such spiritually weak ones, and how should they go about it? Jesus' parable about a shepherd and a lost sheep provides the answers. (**Read Luke 15:4-7.**) When the shepherd in the parable notices that a sheep is missing, he searches for the lost sheep as if it were the only one he possesses. How do Christian elders today imitate the example set by that shepherd? Just as the lost sheep remains precious in the eyes of the shepherd, so those who have lost contact with God's people remain precious in the eyes of the elders. They view a spiritually weak individual as a lost sheep—not a lost cause. Moreover, just as the shepherd decides to "go after the lost one until he finds it," so elders take the initiative to find and help those who are weak.

²¹ What does the shepherd in the parable do when he finds the sheep? He gently lifts it up, "puts it on his shoulders," and carries it back to the flock. Similarly, an elder's heartfelt expressions of concern may gently lift up a spiritually weak one and help him to return to the congregation. That is what happened to Victor, a brother in Africa who stopped associating with the congregation. He relates: "During the eight years that I was inactive, the elders kept reaching out to me." What especially touched him? He explains: "One day, John, an elder with whom I had attended the Pioneer Service School, took time to visit me and showed me some pictures he had taken of us during the school. They brought back so many wonderful memories that I began to long for the joy I felt when I served Jehovah." Shortly after John's visit, Victor returned to the congregation. Today he again serves as a pioneer. Indeed, caring Christian elders contribute greatly to our joy.—2 Cor. 1:24.^[2]

20, 21. How can elders imitate the shepherd in Jesus' parable? Give an example. (See also the box "Fruitful Weekly Visits.")

FOOTNOTE

[2] See the article "Christian Elders —'Fellow Workers for Our Joy,'" in the January 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 27-31.



FRUITFUL WEEKLY VISITS

MOVED by the desire to help the lost sheep, the elders in a congregation in the United States considered what they could do to help those who had lost contact with the flock. They determined that about 30 individuals who had stopped serving Jehovah decades earlier were still living in the congregation's territory. Most of them were now up in age.

Alfredo, one of the elders, got a list of their names and began visiting them. "Every Friday morning, I knock on the door of an inactive one," he relates. When the inactive one opens the door, Alfredo tries to have a relaxed conversation in which he conveys his heartfelt feelings of concern. He tells the inactive brother or sister that the congregation has not forgotten the fine work the person did in behalf of Jehovah's Kingdom. Says Alfredo, "When I told one elderly inactive brother how many hours he had preached and how many magazines he had placed during the last

month that he reported field service in 1976, the brother's eyes welled up with tears."

Alfredo also reads Luke 15:4-7, 10 with those whom he visits, and then he asks them, "What happens when a lost sheep returns to the congregation? Jehovah, Jesus, and the angels rejoice—just think of it!"

For the past two years, Alfredo has been reaching out to inactive ones. What has been the result of his patient efforts? He has had the joy of helping two brothers start associating with the congregation again. They now regularly attend the Sunday meeting. "When they entered the Kingdom Hall, it was my turn to shed some tears," he says with a smile. "Although these inactive ones have started attending meetings," he adds, "I still contact them on Fridays because they tell me that those weekly visits are moments they look forward to—and I feel the same way!"

Improved Oversight Strengthens Unity Among God's People

²² As noted earlier, Jehovah foretold that righteousness and peace would steadily increase among God's people. (Isa. 60:17) Both of these qualities fortify the unity of the congregations. In what ways? As to righteousness, "God is *one* Jehovah." (Deut. 6:4) His righteous standards do not differ from congregations in one country to congregations in another country. No, his standards of right and wrong are *one*, and they are the same for "all the congregations of the holy ones." (1 Cor. 14:33) Hence, a congregation will flourish only when God's standards are applied. As to peace, our King wants us not only to enjoy peace in the congregation but also to be "peacemakers." (Matt. 5:9) Therefore, we "pursue the things making for peace." We take the initiative in resolving differences that may at times arise among us. (Rom. 14:19) In that way, we contribute to both the peace and the unity of our congregation.—Isa. 60:18.

²³ Back in November 1895, when the *Watch Tower* announced the first elder arrangement, the responsible brothers also expressed their heartfelt desire. What was it? They wished and prayed that this new organizational arrangement would help God's people to "come speedily to the *unity* of the faith." Looking back over the decades, we are grateful to note that the gradual refinements in oversight brought about by Jehovah through our King have indeed fortified our unity of worship. (Ps. 99:4) As a result, today all of Jehovah's people worldwide rejoice as we walk "in the same spirit," follow "the same footsteps," and serve the "God of peace" "shoulder to shoulder."—2 Cor. 12:18; **read Zephaniah 3:9.**

22. How do righteousness and peace fortify the unity of the Christian congregation? (See also the box "We Were Amazed.")

23. As Jehovah's servants, what do we enjoy today?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What organizational improvements has the Kingdom brought about?
- How have adjustments in congregation oversight helped you to serve "the God of peace"?
- What words and deeds of an elder have added to your joy?
- How can you personally contribute to both the peace and the unity of the congregation?



HOW THE GOVERNING BODY CARES FOR KINGDOM INTERESTS

Left to right:

Gerrit Lösch, Geoffrey Jackson,
Samuel Herd, Guy Pierce,
Mark Sanderson, David Splane,
Anthony Morris III, Stephen Lett

THE Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses is made up of brothers who are anointed servants of Jehovah God. As a group, they form "the faithful and discreet slave." They have the responsibility of providing spiritual food and giving direction and impetus to the Kingdom-preaching work throughout the earth.—Matt. 24:14, 45-47.

Governing Body meetings are held each week, usually on Wednesday. This enables these brothers to work together in unity. (Ps. 133:1) The members of the Governing Body also serve on various committees. In caring for Kingdom interests, each committee has its area of oversight. Here is a summary of their responsibilities.



Coordinators' Committee

The brothers serving on this committee oversee legal matters as well as the use of the media when it is necessary to convey an accurate picture of our beliefs. They also respond to disasters, outbreaks of persecution, and other emergencies affecting our brotherhood anywhere in the world.



Personnel Committee

This committee is entrusted with the oversight of arrangements for the physical and spiritual welfare and assistance of members of Bethel families earth wide. It oversees the selecting and inviting of new members of Bethel families and handles questions regarding their Bethel service.



Publishing Committee

Those serving on this committee supervise the printing and shipping of Bible literature worldwide. They oversee printeries and properties owned and operated by the various corporations used by Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as all construction worldwide, including the work of building Kingdom Halls. They arrange for the best use of funds donated for the Kingdom work.



Service Committee

The brothers who make up this committee oversee all areas of the evangelizing work and matters affecting congregations, publishers, pioneers, elders, traveling overseers, and missionaries. They supervise, among numerous other things, the activities of Hospital Liaison Committees. They also oversee the preparation of *Our Kingdom Ministry*.



Teaching Committee

This committee oversees the instruction provided at assemblies, conventions, and congregation meetings. It also has oversight of Gilead School, the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, the Pioneer Service School, and the Theocratic Ministry School, as well as other schools. In addition, this committee oversees the development of audio and video programs.



Writing Committee

The brothers serving on this committee supervise the preparation of spiritual food in written and electronic form for fellow believers and the general public. It also cares for the organization's Web site and oversees the translation work done throughout the earth. Additionally, this committee responds to questions about the meaning of certain scriptures and points presented in the publications.

Left:
A brother
being arrested
for preaching
in Eindhoven,
Netherlands, 1945

Right:
Is the right
to preach
protected legally
where you live?



SECTION 4

KINGDOM CONQUESTS

Legally Establishing
the Good News



WHILE preaching from house to house, you hear a siren in the distance. It steadily gets louder. As you start speaking to the next householder, your witnessing partner is distracted when a police car pulls up. An officer gets out and approaches, asking: “Are the two of you the people who have been going door to door talking about the Bible? We’ve been getting complaints!” You answer respectfully, identifying yourselves as Jehovah’s Witnesses. What will happen next?

To a great extent, this depends on history. Over the years, how has the government of the land

where you live dealt with Jehovah’s Witnesses? Is there a measure of religious freedom? If so, that likely has a lot to do with the way your spiritual brothers and sisters over the decades have worked hard in “the defending and legally establishing of the good news.” (Phil. 1:7) Wherever you live, pondering the record of the legal victories of Jehovah’s Witnesses can be very faith-strengthening. In this section, we will examine some of that remarkable record. Our victories provide thrilling proof that the Kingdom is a reality, for we could never have achieved so much on our own!

13

Kingdom Preachers Take Their Case to Court

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

As Jesus foretold,
his people face legal
opposition to their
preaching work

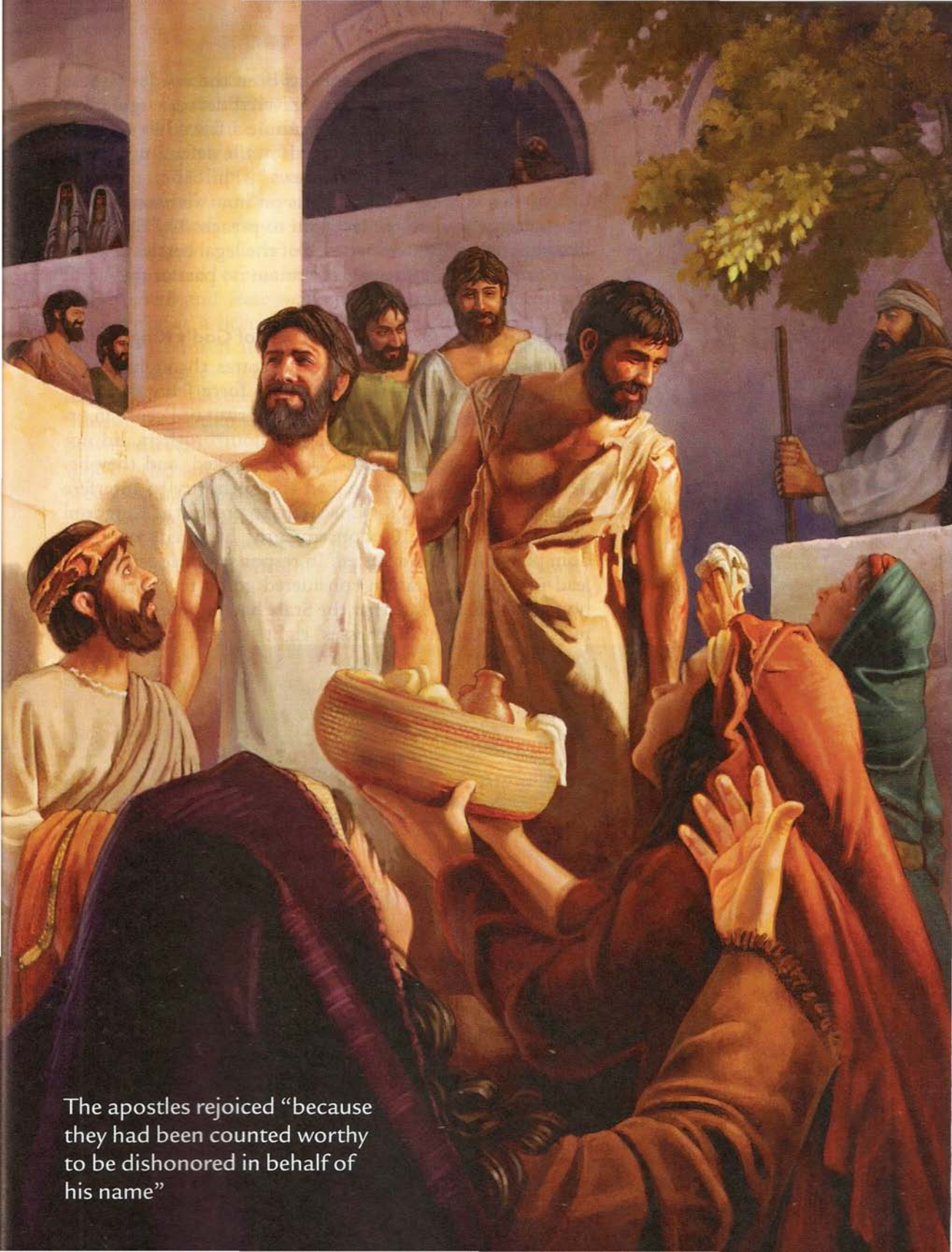
1, 2. (a) The religious leaders succeeded in doing what to the preaching work, but how did the apostles react? (b) Why did the apostles refuse to obey the ban on preaching?

3, 4. (a) What time-tested method has Satan used to attack God's people? (b) What will we consider in this chapter and the following two?

IT IS shortly after Pentecost 33 C.E. The Christian congregation in Jerusalem is only a few weeks old. Clearly, Satan sees this as the right time for action. Before the congregation grows strong, he wants to stamp it out. Quickly, Satan maneuvers events in such a way that the religious leaders ban the Kingdom-preaching work. The apostles, however, courageously preach on, and many men and women become "believers in the Lord."—Acts 4:18, 33; 5:14.

² Enraged, the opposers strike again—this time by jailing all the apostles. However, during the night, Jehovah's angel opens the prison doors, and by daybreak the apostles are back out preaching! Again they are arrested and taken before the rulers, who accuse the apostles of breaking the decree against preaching. In response, the apostles boldly declare: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." The rulers are so infuriated that they want to "do away" with the apostles. But at that critical moment, the esteemed Law teacher Gamaliel speaks up, warning the rulers: "Be careful . . . Do not meddle with these men, but let them alone." Surprisingly, the rulers take his advice and let the apostles go. What do those faithful men do? Undaunted, they continue "without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus."—Acts 5:17-21, 27-42; Prov. 21:1, 30.

³ That court case back in 33 C.E. was the first occurrence of official opposition to the Christian congregation, but by far not the last. (Acts 4:5-8; 16:20; 17:6, 7) In our time, Satan still stirs up opposers of true worship to incite the authorities to place bans on our preaching work. Opposers have leveled a variety of charges against God's people. One is that we are disturbers of public order—troublemakers. Another is that we are seditionists; still another, that we are commercial salesmen—peddlers. At the appropriate times, our brothers have gone to court to prove such



The apostles rejoiced “because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name”

5. In the late 1930's, why were Kingdom preachers arrested, and what action was considered by those taking the lead?

6, 7. What happened to the Cantwell family?

accusations to be false. What has been the result of these cases? How do court verdicts delivered decades ago affect you personally today? Let us examine a few court cases to see in what ways they have helped "in the defending and legally establishing of the good news."—Phil. 1:7.

⁴ In this chapter we will focus on how we have defended our right to have the freedom to preach. The following two chapters will examine some of the legal battles that we have fought in our struggle to remain no part of the world and live by Kingdom standards.

Troublemakers—Or Loyal Advocates of God's Kingdom?

⁵ In the late 1930's, cities and states throughout the **United States of America** sought to force Jehovah's Witnesses to obtain some form of legal permit or license in order to engage in their ministry. But our brothers did not apply for licenses. A license can be revoked, and they believed that no government had the authority to interfere with Jesus' command for Christians to preach the Kingdom message. (Mark 13:10) Consequently, hundreds of Kingdom preachers were arrested. In response, those taking the lead in the organization considered going to court. They hoped to demonstrate that the State had imposed unlawful restrictions on the Witnesses' right to practice their religion freely. And in 1938 an incident occurred that led to a landmark court case. What happened?

⁶ On Tuesday morning, April 26, 1938, Newton Cantwell, aged 60; his wife, Esther; and their sons Henry, Russell, and Jesse—all five of them special pioneers—set out for a day of preaching in the city of New Haven, Connecticut. Actually, they were prepared to be away for longer than a day. Why? They had already been arrested on several occasions, so they realized that they could be arrested again. Yet, that prospect did not dampen the desire of the Cantwells to preach the Kingdom message. They arrived in New Haven in two cars. Newton drove the family car loaded with Bible literature and portable phonographs, while 22-year-old Henry drove a sound car. Indeed, as anticipated, within hours they were stopped by the police.

⁷ First, Russell, aged 18, was arrested, and then Newton and Esther. From a distance, Jesse, aged 16, looked on as his parents and brother were led away by the police. Henry was preaching in another part of town, so young Jesse was left by himself. Still, he picked up his phonograph and continued preaching. Two Catholic men let Jesse play a record

of Brother Rutherford's lecture entitled "Enemies." But as they listened to the lecture, the men got so angry that they wanted to strike Jesse. Calmly, Jesse walked away from them, but shortly thereafter, a policeman stopped him. So, Jesse too ended up in custody. The police did not charge Sister Cantwell, but they did charge Brother Cantwell and his sons. However, they were released on bail that same day.

⁸ A few months later, in September 1938, the Cantwell family appeared before the trial court in New Haven. Newton, Russell, and Jesse were convicted of soliciting donations without a license. Despite appeals to the Supreme Court of Connecticut, Jesse was found guilty of inciting a breach of peace—of being a troublemaker. Why? Because the two Catholic men who had listened to the record testified in court that the lecture insulted their religion and provoked them. To challenge the convictions, the responsible brothers in our organization appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court—the highest court of the land.

⁹ Starting on March 29, 1940, Chief Justice Charles E. Hughes and eight associate judges listened to the arguments presented by Brother Hayden Covington, a lawyer

8. Why did the court find Jesse Cantwell guilty of being a troublemaker?

9, 10. (a) How did the U.S. Supreme Court rule in the case of the Cantwell family? (b) How do we still benefit from that ruling?

Hayden Covington (front, center), Glen How (left), and others leaving a courthouse after a legal victory



11. What campaign did our brothers in Canada carry out, and why?

12. (a) How did opposers react to the tract campaign? (b) Our brothers were charged with what crime? (See also footnote.)



Quebec's Burning Hate for God and Christ and Freedom Is the Shame of All Canada

FOOTNOTES

[1] This case, *Cantwell v. State of Connecticut*, was the first of 43 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court that Brother Hayden Covington would handle in defense of the brothers. He died in 1978. His widow, Dorothy, at age 90, still faithfully serves as a pioneer.

[2] The charge was based on a law enacted in 1606. It allowed a jury to declare a person guilty if they felt that what that one said promoted hostility—even if what was said was true.

for Jehovah's Witnesses.^[1] When the attorney for the state of Connecticut presented his arguments in an effort to prove that the Witnesses were troublemakers, one justice asked: "Was it not true that the message that Christ Jesus proclaimed was unpopular in his day?" The state's attorney replied: "It was, and, if I remember my Bible correctly, it also tells what happened to Jesus for proclaiming that message." What a revealing statement! Unwittingly, the attorney grouped the Witnesses with Jesus and grouped the state with those who convicted him. On May 20, 1940, the Court unanimously ruled in favor of the Witnesses.

¹⁰ What was the significance of the Court's ruling? It expanded protection of the right to the free exercise of religion so that no federal, state, or local government could lawfully limit religious freedom. Further, the Court found in Jesse's conduct "no . . . menace to public peace and order." Hence, the ruling clearly established that Jehovah's Witnesses are not disturbers of public order. What a decisive legal victory for God's servants! How do we still benefit from it? A lawyer who is a Witness notes: "The right to exercise our religion freely without fear of unfair restrictions allows us as Witnesses today to share a message of hope with others in the communities where we live."

Seditionists—Or Proclaimers of Truth?

¹¹ During the 1940's, Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada faced fierce opposition. Hence, in 1946, to publicize the State's disregard for the right to freedom of worship, our brothers there held a 16-day campaign in which they distributed a tract entitled *Quebec's Burning Hate for God and Christ and Freedom Is the Shame of All Canada*. This four-page tract exposed in detail the clergy-instigated riots, police brutality, and mob violence committed against our brothers in the province of Quebec. "Lawless arrests of Jehovah's witnesses continue," stated the tract. "There are about 800 charges stacked up against Jehovah's witnesses in Greater Montreal."

¹² Quebec's Premier Maurice Duplessis, working hand in glove with Roman Catholic Cardinal Villeneuve, reacted to the tract by declaring a "war without mercy" against the Witnesses. The number of prosecutions quickly doubled from 800 to 1,600. "The police arrested us so many times that we lost count," said a pioneer sister. Witnesses who were caught distributing the tract were charged with the crime of publishing "seditious libel."^[2]

¹³ In 1947, Brother Aimé Boucher and his daughters Gisèle, aged 18, and Lucille, aged 11, were the first to be tried in court on charges of sedition. They had distributed *Quebec's Burning Hate* tracts near their farm in the hills south of Quebec City, but it was hard to picture them as lawless troublemakers. Brother Boucher was a humble and mild man who quietly tended his small farm and occasionally traveled into town by horse and buggy. Still, his family had endured some of the very abuses mentioned in the tract. The trial court judge, who hated Witnesses, refused to admit evidence that proved the Bouchers' innocence. Instead, he accepted the prosecution's position that the tract stirred up ill will and that thus the Bouchers should be found guilty. So the judge's view boiled down to this: It is a crime to tell the truth! Aimé and Gisèle were convicted of seditious libel, and even young Lucille spent two days locked in jail. The brothers appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, the land's highest court, which agreed to hear the case.

¹⁴ Meanwhile, our courageous brothers and sisters in Quebec continued to preach the Kingdom message in the face of unrelenting and violent attacks—often with outstanding results. During the four years after the start of the tract campaign in 1946, the number of Witnesses in Quebec increased from 300 to 1,000!^[3]

¹⁵ In June 1950, the full Supreme Court of Canada, made up of nine justices, heard the case of Aimé Boucher. Six months later, on December 18, 1950, the Court ruled in our favor. Why? Brother Glen How, a lawyer for the Witnesses, explained that the Court agreed with the argument presented by the defense that "sedition" requires incitement to violence or insurrection against government. The tract, however, "contained no such incitements and was therefore a lawful form of free speech." Brother How added: "I saw firsthand how Jehovah gave the victory."^[4]

¹⁶ The Supreme Court's decision was, indeed, a resounding victory for God's Kingdom. It eliminated the basis for all the other 122 pending cases in which Witnesses in Quebec had been charged with seditious libel. Further, the Court's ruling meant that citizens of Canada and the Commonwealth now had the freedom to voice their concerns over the manner of government. Moreover, this victory broke the back of Quebec's Church-State attack on the liberties of Jehovah's Witnesses.^[5]

13. Who were the first to be tried on charges of sedition, and how did the court rule?

14. How did the brothers in Quebec react during the years of persecution?

15, 16. (a) How did the Supreme Court of Canada rule in the case of the Boucher family? (b) What effect did this victory have on our brothers and on others?

FOOTNOTES

[3] In 1950, 164 full-time ministers served in Quebec—including 63 Gilead graduates who had willingly accepted their assignment despite the fierce opposition that awaited them.

[4] Brother W. Glen How was a courageous attorney who, from 1943 to 2003, skillfully fought hundreds of legal battles for Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada and abroad.

[5] For more details of this case, see the article "The Battle Is Not Yours, but God's" in the April 22, 2000, issue of *Awake!* pages 18-24.

17. How do some governments try to control our preaching activities?

18, 19. How did authorities in Denmark try to restrain the preaching work?

20. How did the Supreme Court of Denmark rule, and what was our brothers' reaction?

21, 22. What was the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Brother Murdock?

Peddlers—Or Zealous Heralds of God's Kingdom?

¹⁷ Like the early Christians, Jehovah's servants today "are not peddlers of the word of God." (**Read 2 Corinthians 2:17.**) Still, some governments try to control our ministerial activities by means of laws that regulate commerce. Let us consider two of the court cases that ruled on the question of whether Jehovah's Witnesses are peddlers or are ministers.

¹⁸ **Denmark.** On October 1, 1932, a law took effect that made it illegal to sell printed material without a peddler's license. Our brothers, however, did not apply for any license. The next day, five publishers spent the day preaching in Roskilde, a town some 20 miles west of Copenhagen, the capital. At day's end, one of the publishers, August Lehmann, was missing. He had been arrested for selling goods without a license.

¹⁹ On December 19, 1932, August Lehmann appeared in court. He testified that he had called on people to offer Bible literature, but he denied that he was peddling. The trial court agreed with him. It stated: "The defendant . . . is able to support himself financially, and [he] has not received any economic benefit nor had any intentions to receive such, but instead his activities have caused him financial loss." Siding with the Witnesses, the court ruled that Lehmann's activity could not "be characterized as trade." The adversaries of God's people, though, were determined to restrain the preaching work throughout the land. (Ps. 94:20) The public prosecutor appealed all the way to the country's Supreme Court. How did our brothers respond?

²⁰ In the week leading up to the Supreme Court hearing, Witnesses throughout Denmark stepped up their preaching activities. On Tuesday, October 3, 1933, the Supreme Court announced its decision. It agreed with the lower court that August Lehmann had not broken the law. This ruling meant that the Witnesses could continue to preach freely. To express their gratitude to Jehovah for giving this legal victory, the brothers and sisters increased their preaching activities even more. Ever since that Court decision, our brothers in Denmark have been able to carry out their ministry without government interference.

²¹ **United States.** On Sunday, February 25, 1940, pioneer Robert Murdock, Jr., and seven other Witnesses were arrested while preaching in Jeannette, a city near Pittsburgh, in the state of Pennsylvania. They were convicted of failing to



buy a license to offer literature. On appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

²² On May 3, 1943, the Supreme Court announced its ruling, which came out in defense of the Witnesses. The Court objected to the requirement of obtaining a license because that imposed “a charge for the enjoyment of a right granted by the Federal Constitution.” The Court invalidated the city ordinance as “an abridgment of freedom of press and a restraint on the free exercise of religion.” In delivering the Court’s majority opinion, Justice William O. Douglas stated that the activity of Jehovah’s Witnesses “is more than preaching; it is more than distribution of religious literature. It is a combination of both.” He added: “This form of religious activity occupies the same high estate . . . as do worship in the churches and preaching from the pulpits.”

²³ This Supreme Court ruling constituted a major legal victory for God’s people. It affirmed what we truly are—Christian ministers, not commercial salesmen. On that memorable day in 1943, Jehovah’s Witnesses won 12 of their 13 cases before the Supreme Court, including the *Murdock*

Courageous Witnesses in Denmark in the 1930’s

23. Why are the court victories of 1943 important for us today?

24. How do we react when a government bans our preaching work?

25, 26. What events in Nicaragua led to a Supreme Court case there, and what was the outcome?

case. These court decisions have served as a powerful precedent in more recent court cases in which our opposers have again challenged our right to preach the Kingdom message publicly and from house to house.

“We Must Obey God as Ruler Rather Than Men”

24 As Jehovah’s servants, we deeply appreciate it when governments grant us the legal right to preach the Kingdom message freely. However, when a government bans our preaching work, we simply adjust our methods, continuing our work in any way possible. Like the apostles, “we must obey God as ruler rather than men.” (Acts 5:29; Matt. 28:19, 20) At the same time, we appeal to the courts to lift the ban on our activities. Consider two examples.

25 **Nicaragua.** On November 19, 1952, missionary and branch servant Donovan Munsterman stepped into the Office of Immigration in Managua, the capital. He had been ordered to appear before Captain Arnaldo García, who headed the office. The captain told Donovan that all of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Nicaragua were “prohibited to continue preaching their doctrines and promoting their religious activities.” When asked why, Captain García explained that the Witnesses did not have permission from the minister of government to perform their ministry and that they were accused of being communists. Who were our accusers? The Roman Catholic clergy.

26 Brother Munsterman immediately appealed to the Ministry of Government and Religions as well as to Presi-

Brothers in Nicaragua during the ban



dent Anastasio Somoza García, but to no avail. So the brothers adjusted their methods. They closed the Kingdom Hall, met in smaller groups, and stopped street witnessing, but they still preached the Kingdom message. At the same time, they filed a petition for injunction with the Supreme Court of Nicaragua, asking the Court to invalidate the ban. Newspapers widely reported the ban and the contents of the petition, and the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. What was the outcome? On June 19, 1953, the Supreme Court published its unanimous decision in favor of the Witnesses. The Court found that the ban violated constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, conscience, and manifestation of beliefs. It also ordered that relations between the government of Nicaragua and the Witnesses be restored to their former state.

27 Nicaraguans were amazed that the Supreme Court had sided with the Witnesses. Until then, the influence of the clergy had been so strong that the Court avoided conflicts with them. Also, the power of government officials was so great that the Court seldom went against their decisions. Our brothers were confident that they received this victory because they had received protection from their King and had continued preaching.—Acts 1:8.

28 Zaire. In the mid-1980's, there were about 35,000 Witnesses in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. To keep up with the steady growth of Kingdom activities, the branch was constructing new facilities. In December 1985, an international convention was held in the capital city, Kinshasa, and 32,000 delegates from many parts of the world filled the city's stadium. But then, conditions for Jehovah's servants began to change. What happened?

29 Brother Marcel Filteau, a missionary from Quebec, Canada, who had experienced the persecution of the Duplessis regime, served in Zaire at the time. He related what took place: "On March 12, 1986, the responsible brothers were handed a letter that declared the association of Jehovah's Witnesses of Zaire illegal." The ban was signed by the country's president, Mobutu Sese Seko.

30 The next day the national radio announced: "We shall never again hear of Jehovah's Witnesses in [Zaire]." Instant persecution followed. Kingdom Halls were destroyed, and our brothers were robbed, arrested, imprisoned, and beaten. Even Witness children were put in prison. On October 12, 1988, the government seized our organization's

27. Why were the people of Nicaragua amazed at the Court's decision, and how did the brothers view this victory?

28, 29. In the mid-1980's, what turn of events took place in Zaire?

30. The Branch Committee needed to make what weighty decision, and what did they decide to do?

"During the period of that litigation, we saw how Jehovah can change things"

31, 32. What remarkable decision did the Supreme Court of Zaire make, and what effect did it have on our brothers?

belongings, and the Civil Guard, an army unit, occupied the branch property. The responsible brothers filed an appeal with President Mobutu, but they did not receive a reply. At that point, the Branch Committee had to make a weighty decision, "Shall we appeal to the Supreme Court, or shall we wait?" Timothy Holmes, who was a missionary and the country's Branch Committee coordinator at the time, recalls, "We looked to Jehovah for wisdom and direction." After prayerful deliberation, the committee felt that the time for legal action was not right. Instead, they focused on caring for the brotherhood and on finding ways to continue the preaching work.

³¹ Several years passed. Pressure on the Witnesses lessened, and respect for human rights increased in the country. The Branch Committee concluded that the time had come to challenge the ban by appealing to the Supreme Court of Justice of Zaire. Remarkably, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. Then, on January 8, 1993, nearly seven years after the presidential ban order, the Court ruled that the government's action against the Witnesses had been unlawful, and the ban was lifted. Just think of what that meant! Putting their own lives at risk, the justices had annulled a decision of the country's president! Says Brother Holmes, "During the period of that litigation, we saw how Jehovah can change things." (Dan. 2:21) This victory fortified the faith of our brothers. They felt that the King,

Witnesses in the Democratic Republic of Congo rejoice over their freedom to worship Jehovah



Jesus, had directed his people to know when and how to act.

³² With the ban lifted, the branch office was allowed to bring in missionaries, build new branch facilities, and import Bible literature.^[6] What a joy it is for God's servants worldwide to observe how Jehovah protects the spiritual welfare of his people!—Isa. 52:10.

“Jehovah Is My Helper”

³³ Our review of some legal battles proves that Jesus has lived up to his promise: “I will give you words and wisdom that all your opposers together will not be able to resist or dispute.” (**Read Luke 21:12-15.**) At times, Jehovah has evidently raised up modern-day Gamaliels to protect his people or has moved courageous judges and lawyers to stand up for justice. Jehovah has blunted the weapons of our opposers. (**Read Isaiah 54:17.**) Opposition cannot stop God's work.

³⁴ Why are our legal victories so remarkable? Consider this: Jehovah's Witnesses are not prominent or influential. We do not vote, support political campaigns, or lobby politicians. Moreover, those of us drawn into high court cases generally are considered “uneducated and ordinary.” (Acts 4:13) So, humanly speaking, the courts have little incentive to rule against our powerful religious and political opposers and to come to our aid. Nevertheless, courts have repeatedly decided in our favor! Our legal victories prove that we walk “in the sight of God and in company with Christ.” (2 Cor. 2:17) Hence, with the apostle Paul, we declare: “Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid.”—Heb. 13:6.

33. What do we learn from this brief review of a few court cases?

34. Why are our legal victories so remarkable, and what do they prove? (See also the box “Noteworthy High Court Victories That Advanced Kingdom Preaching.”)

FOOTNOTE

[6] The Civil Guard eventually vacated the branch property; but new branch facilities were constructed in another location.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How did the courts establish that we are ministers, not troublemakers, seditionists, or peddlers?
- How do we still benefit from past legal victories?
- When our preaching work is banned, how do we respond?
- From a human viewpoint, why is it remarkable that Jehovah's people have won so many landmark court cases?
- How has this review of legal battles strengthened your faith?

NOTEWORTHY HIGH COURT VICTORIES THAT ADVANCED KINGDOM PREACHING

Stara Pazova, Serbia



DECISION November 11, 1927

COUNTRY Switzerland

ISSUE Freedom of belief.

FACTS A police officer stops Brother Adolf Huber in his preaching work, claims that our brother is disturbing religious peace, and confiscates his Bible leaflets.

RULING Before the Federal Supreme Court, Brother Huber challenges the police officer's actions. The Court finds that confiscating religious tracts is a violation of "freedom of belief."

IMPACT The ruling stops police interference with the Bible Students' ministry.

DECISION July 9, 1935

COUNTRY Romania

ISSUE Freedom of expression.

FACTS Six Witnesses are arrested for distributing books that are "*against public order and state security*." The brothers are sentenced to 15 days in jail.

RULING The High Court of Cassation and Justice (Supreme Court) finds that the Witnesses carry out their activities peacefully, that their literature is no danger to public order, and that they have the right to share their opinion.

IMPACT This ruling, along with others among 530 Witness cases heard from 1933 to 1939, guaranteed the constitutional rights that allowed the brothers to keep preaching freely until 1948. Currently, our preaching work can be carried out freely.

DECISION March 17, 1953

COUNTRY Netherlands

ISSUE Freedom of expression and of press.

FACTS Brother Pieter Havenaar is arrested for violating an ordinance that allows the offering of literature only on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

RULING The Supreme Court finds the restriction too far-reaching.

IMPACT This decision invalidates any ordinance that limits the right to offer printed material to the extent that it becomes virtually impossible to engage in that activity.

DECISION October 6, 1953

COUNTRY Canada

ISSUE Freedom of worship and of expression.

FACTS A Quebec City bylaw prohibits distributing literature without a police

permit. Traveling overseer Brother Laurier Saumur spends three months in jail for violating this bylaw.

RULING The Supreme Court finds the application of the bylaw to the Witnesses illegal. The Court recognizes that the public distribution of printed Bible messages is part of the Christian worship of Jehovah's Witnesses, which is constitutionally protected from censorship.

IMPACT The decision dismisses over 1,600 bylaw charges in the province of Quebec.

DECISION July 13, 1983

COUNTRY Serbia

ISSUE Freedom of expression and of press.

FACTS Two sisters are arrested for distributing Bible literature. They are charged with "offences against Public Order and Peace" and are imprisoned for five days.

RULING The Supreme Court finds no violation of law and no basis for the claim that they are disturbing the peace.

IMPACT After this legal victory, arrests and confiscation of literature decrease.

DECISION May 26, 1986

COUNTRY Turkey

ISSUE Freedom of belief.

FACTS After three Witness families apply to register their religion as Jehovah's Witnesses, 23 brothers and sisters are imprisoned for trying to change the social or political order.

RULING The Supreme Court annuls the convictions, exonerates the Witnesses, and upholds the right of freedom of belief for Jehovah's Witnesses.

IMPACT The decision eliminates arrests for Christian activity and expands religious liberty in Turkey for all citizens.

DECISION May 25, 1993

COUNTRY Greece

ISSUE Freedom to manifest one's religion.

FACTS In 1986, for the 18th time, Brother Minos Kokkinakis is convicted of proselytism. From 1938 to 1992, the Greek law prohibiting proselytism was the basis for over 19,000 arrests of Jehovah's Witnesses.

RULING The European Court of Human Rights finds violation of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; finds unjustified interference with freedom to manifest one's religion; and upholds the status of Jehovah's Witnesses as a "known religion."

IMPACT The Greek government directs all judicial authorities not to violate the *Kokkinakis* decision, eliminating further convictions for proselytism.

DECISION June 17, 2002

COUNTRY United States

ISSUE Freedom of expression.

FACTS The village of Stratton in the state of Ohio issues an ordinance that requires anyone engaging in door-to-door activity to obtain a permit. Federal trial and appeals courts hold that the ordinance is constitutional.

RULING The Supreme Court strikes down the ordinance as unconstitutional and reaffirms the right to free exercise of religion and the right to freedom of expression. The Court notes that the Witnesses explained that they "derive their authority to preach from Scripture."

IMPACT Hundreds of municipalities desist from applying similar ordinances to the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses.

14

Loyally Supporting God's Government and No Other

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Out of loyalty
to the Kingdom,
God's people remain
no part of the world

1, 2. (a) What principle has guided Jesus' followers down to our day? (b) How have enemies tried to conquer us, and with what result?

3, 4. (a) What events took place at the time of the Kingdom's birth? (b) Have God's people always fully understood the issue of neutrality? Explain.

JESUS stood before Pilate, the Jewish nation's most powerful secular judge, and stated a principle that has guided His genuine followers down to our day. "My Kingdom is no part of this world," he said. "If my Kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my Kingdom is not from this source." (John 18:36) Pilate had Jesus executed, but the victory was short-lived. Jesus was resurrected. Emperors of the mighty Roman Empire tried to crush Christ's followers, but their efforts were futile. Christians spread the Kingdom message throughout the ancient world.—Col. 1:23.

² After the Kingdom was established in 1914, some of the strongest military powers in history tried to wipe out God's people. But none have conquered us. Many governments and political factions tried to force us to take sides in their conflicts. They did not succeed in dividing us. Today, subjects of the Kingdom live in virtually every nation on earth. Even so, we are united in a genuine global brotherhood, remaining strictly neutral as to the world's political affairs. Our unity provides compelling evidence that God's Kingdom rules and that the King Jesus Christ continues to direct, refine, and protect his subjects. Consider how he has done so, and note just some of the faith-strengthening legal victories he has given us as we continue to remain "no part of the world."—John 17:14.

An Issue Thrust to the Fore

³ Following the Kingdom's birth, war raged in heaven, and then Satan was cast down to the earth. (**Read Revelation 12:7-10, 12.**) A war also raged on earth, one that tested the resolve of God's people. They were determined to follow Jesus' example and be no part of the world. But

at first they did not fully understand how much it would require of them to keep out of all political matters.

⁴ For example, Volume VI of the *Millennial Dawn* series,^[1] which was published in 1904, encouraged Christians to avoid participation in war. However, it reasoned that if a Christian was conscripted, he should strive to obtain some form of noncombatant service. If that failed and he was sent into combat, he should ensure that he did not commit murder. Commenting on the situation at that time, Herbert Senior, who lived in Britain and was baptized in 1905, said: "There was a lot of confusion among the brothers and no clear advice as to whether it would be right to join the army as a soldier but only for noncombatant work."

⁵ However, *The Watch Tower* of September 1, 1915, began to refine our understanding of this issue. Regarding the recommendations made in *Studies in the Scriptures*, it said: "We wonder if such a course would not mean compromise." But what if a Christian were threatened with being shot for refusing a uniform and military service? The article reasoned: "Would it be any worse to be shot because of loyalty to the Prince of Peace and refusal to disobey His order than to be shot while under the banner of these earthly kings and apparently giving them support and, in appearance at least, compromising the teachings of our Heavenly King? Of the two deaths we would prefer the former—prefer to die because of faithfulness to our Heavenly King." Despite that forceful statement, the article concluded: "We are not urging this course. We are merely suggesting it."

⁶ Some brothers saw the issue clearly and met it head-on. Herbert Senior, quoted earlier, said: "To me, there was no difference in principle between unloading shells from a ship [noncombatant service] and putting those shells into a gun to be fired." (Luke 16:10) As a result of his conscientious objection to military service, Brother Senior was sent to prison. He and 4 other brothers were among a group of 16 conscientious objectors, including men from other religious denominations, who served some of their time at Richmond prison in Britain and later became known as the Richmond 16. At one point, Herbert and others like him were secretly shipped to the front lines in France. There, they were sentenced to be shot. He and a number of others were lined up in front of a firing squad, but they were not killed. Instead, their sentence was commuted to ten years in prison.

5. How did *The Watch Tower* of September 1, 1915, begin to refine our understanding?

6. What have you learned from the example of Brother Herbert Senior?



"I learned to appreciate that God's people were to be at peace with everyone, even amid threats of war."

—Simon Kraker
(See paragraph 7)

FOOTNOTE

[1] This volume is also known by the title *The New Creation*. Later, the *Millennial Dawn* volumes were called *Studies in the Scriptures*.

7. By the start of World War II, what had God's people come to see?

8, 9. How was the apostle John's prophecy fulfilled?

⁷ By the time World War II broke out, Jehovah's people as a whole had come to see more clearly what it meant to be neutral and what was required if they were to follow Jesus' example. (Matt. 26:51-53; John 17:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:21) For instance, the November 1, 1939, issue of *The Watchtower* carried the landmark article entitled "Neutrality," which stated: "The rule by which Jehovah's covenant people must now be governed is that of strict neutrality between the nations at war." Regarding that article, Simon Kraker, who later served at headquarters, in Brooklyn, New York, said: "I learned to appreciate that God's people were to be at peace with everyone, even amid threats of war." That spiritual food was provided at the proper time and helped to brace God's people for an unprecedented assault on their loyalty to the Kingdom.

Threatened by a "River" of Opposition

⁸ The apostle John prophesied that after the Kingdom's birth in 1914, the dragon, Satan the Devil, would attempt to wipe out the supporters of God's Kingdom by spewing

"HE DIED FOR GOD'S HONOR"

DURING the second world war, Jehovah's Witnesses were a small minority in Nazi Germany. Historian Detlef Garbe writes that in spite of that fact, "the majority of people who were condemned as conscientious objectors by the military courts . . . in the Third Reich were Jehovah's Witnesses." Gerhard Steinacher, of Austria, aged 19, was one of those. Just days after the start of World War II, Nazi authorities arrested him for refusing to join the German army.

In November 1939, Gerhard received the sentence of death. That month he wrote from prison: "I want nothing else but to honor God, to keep his commandments, and to ask him to receive us into his Kingdom, where eternal life and peace will be."

On March 29, 1940, the day before his execution, Gerhard bid his parents farewell: "I am still a child. Only if the Lord gives me strength can I stand, and this is what I ask." Gerhard was executed at about six o'clock the next morning, likely by guillotine. His epitaph reads: "He died for God's honor."



out a symbolic river from its mouth.^[2] (**Read Revelation 12:9, 15.**) How was John's prophecy fulfilled? From the 1920's onward, there was a surge of opposition against God's people. Like many other brothers who lived in North America during the second world war, Brother Kraker was thrown into prison for his loyalty to God's Kingdom. In fact, during the war, Jehovah's Witnesses made up more than two thirds of all inmates who because of religious objections to the war were being held in federal prisons in the United States.

⁹ The Devil and his agents were intent on breaking the integrity of Kingdom subjects no matter where they lived. Throughout Africa, Europe, and the United States, they were brought before courts and parole boards. Because of their unwavering determination to remain neutral, they were imprisoned, beaten, and maimed. In Germany, God's people faced enormous pressure because they refused to hail Hitler or join the war effort. An estimated 6,000 were detained in prison camps during the Nazi era, and more than 1,600 German and non-German Witnesses died at the hands of their tormentors. Even so, the Devil was unable to inflict any permanent harm on God's people.—Mark 8:34, 35.

“The Earth” Swallows “the River”

¹⁰ The prophecy recorded by the apostle John revealed that “the earth”—elements of this system that are more reasonable—would swallow “the river” of persecution, thus coming to the aid of God's people. How has that part of the prophecy been fulfilled? In the decades following World War II, “the earth” has often intervened in behalf of the faithful supporters of the Messianic Kingdom. (**Read Revelation 12:16.**) For example, various influential courts have protected the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses to refuse military service and to decline when asked to participate in nationalistic ceremonies. First, consider just some of the major victories that Jehovah has given his people regarding the issue of performing military service.—Ps. 68:20.

¹¹ **United States.** Anthony Sicurella was one of six children raised by Witness parents. At age 15, he was baptized. When he turned 21, he registered with the draft board as a minister of religion. Two years later, in 1950, he applied for a reclassification as a conscientious objector. Although the Federal Bureau of Investigation's report found nothing unfavorable, the Department of Justice denied his claim. After

10. What does “the earth” symbolize, and how has it intervened in behalf of God's people?

11, 12. What issues did Brothers Sicurella and Thlimmenos face, and what was the outcome?

FOOTNOTE

[2] For a discussion of this prophecy, see the publication *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, chapter 27, pages 184-186.

13, 14. What lessons do you feel we can learn from the cases involving Brothers Stefanov and Bayatyan?



“Before entering the courtroom, I prayed fervently to Jehovah, and then I felt how he gave me calmness.”

—Ivailo Stefanov
(See paragraph 13)

FOOTNOTES

[3] The settlement also required the Bulgarian government to offer alternative civilian service under civilian administration to all conscientious objectors.

[4] For a more complete account, see the November 1, 2012, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 29-31.

several court proceedings, the U.S. Supreme Court heard Brother Sicurella's case and reversed the lower court's decision by ruling in favor of Brother Sicurella. This ruling helped to set a precedent for other citizens of the United States who were conscientious objectors to military service.

12 Greece. In 1983, Iakovos Thlimmenos was convicted of insubordination for refusing to wear a military uniform and was sentenced to prison. After his release, he applied to become an accountant, but his application was rejected because he had a criminal record. He took the matter to court, but after losing his case in the Greek courts, he applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). In 2000, the Grand Chamber of the ECHR, a panel consisting of 17 judges, ruled in his favor, setting a precedent against discrimination. Before this ruling, over 3,500 brothers in Greece had criminal records because of being imprisoned for their neutral stand. After this favorable decision, Greece passed a law to clear those brothers of any criminal charges. Also, a law giving all Greek citizens the right to perform alternative civilian service, which had been passed just a few years before, was reaffirmed when the Constitution of Greece was revised.

13 Bulgaria. In 1994, Ivailo Stefanov was 19 when he was drafted into the army. He refused to join the army or to perform noncombatant duties directed by the military. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison but appealed the decision, based on his right as a conscientious objector. His case was eventually referred to the ECHR. In 2001, before the case could be heard, a friendly settlement was reached with Brother Stefanov. The Bulgarian government not only granted amnesty to Brother Stefanov but also to all Bulgarian citizens who were willing to perform alternative civilian service.^[3]

14 Armenia. Vahan Bayatyan became eligible for compulsory military service in 2001.^[4] He conscientiously objected to serving in the military but lost every appeal in the domestic courts. In September 2002, he began serving a two-and-a-half-year sentence but was released after serving ten and a half months. During that time, he appealed to the ECHR, which heard his case. However, on October 27, 2009, that Court also ruled against him. The verdict seemed to be a crushing blow to the brothers in Armenia who faced this issue. However, the Grand Chamber of the ECHR reviewed the ruling. On July 7, 2011, the Court

Vahan Bayatyan in the
Grand Chamber of the
European Court of
Human Rights



ruled in favor of Brother Bayatyan. This was the first time that the ECHR recognized that conscientious objection to military service based on one's religious beliefs should be protected under the right of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. That ruling protects the rights not only of Jehovah's Witnesses but of hundreds of millions of people in countries that are members of the Council of Europe.^[5]

The Issue of Nationalistic Ceremonies

¹⁵ Jehovah's people remain loyal to the Messianic Kingdom not only by refusing military service but also by respectfully declining to join in nationalistic ceremonies. Especially since the outbreak of World War II, a wave of nationalistic fervor has swept the globe. Citizens of many countries have been required to vow allegiance to their

15. Why do Jehovah's people refuse to join in nationalistic ceremonies?

FOOTNOTE

[5] Over a 20-year span, the government of Armenia had imprisoned more than 450 young Witnesses. In November 2013, the last of these men were released from prison.

16, 17. What issue did Lillian and William Gobitas face, and what have you learned from their case?

18, 19. What did Pablo Barros say helped him to remain strong, and how can other servants of Jehovah imitate his example?

homeland by reciting a pledge, singing a national anthem, or saluting a country's flag. However, we give our exclusive devotion to Jehovah. (Ex. 20:4, 5) As a result, we have experienced a flood of persecution. Even so, Jehovah has again used "the earth" to swallow up some of this opposition. Note just a few of the remarkable victories that Jehovah through Christ has granted us in this matter.—Ps. 3:8.

16 United States. In 1940, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 8 to 1 against Jehovah's Witnesses in the case known as *Minersville School District v. Gobitis*. Lillian Gobitas,^[6] aged 12, and her brother William, aged 10, wanted to remain loyal to Jehovah, so they refused to salute the flag or recite the pledge. As a result, they were expelled from school. Their case came before the Supreme Court, and the Court concluded that the school's actions were constitutional because they were in the interest of "national unity." That ruling ignited a firestorm of persecution. More Witness children were expelled from school, adult Witnesses lost their jobs, and a number of Witnesses suffered vicious attacks from mobs. The book *The Lustre of Our Country* states that the "persecution of Witnesses from 1941 to 1943 was the greatest outbreak of religious intolerance in twentieth-century America."

17 The victory for God's enemies was short-lived. In 1943, the Supreme Court considered another case similar to the *Gobitis* case. It is known as *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. This time, the Supreme Court granted victory to Jehovah's Witnesses. It was the first time in U.S. history that the Supreme Court had reversed itself in such a short period of time. After that ruling, the overt persecution of Jehovah's people in the United States drastically decreased. In the process, the rights of all citizens of the United States were strengthened.

18 Argentina. Pablo and Hugo Barros, ages seven and eight respectively, were expelled from school in 1976 for not participating in a flag-raising ceremony. On one occasion, the headmistress shoved Pablo and hit him on the head. She made both boys stay after school for an hour, trying to force them to participate in patriotic ceremonies. Recalling the ordeal, Pablo said: "Without Jehovah's help, I would not have been able to withstand the pressure to break my integrity."

19 When the case came to court, the judge upheld the school's decision to expel Pablo and Hugo. However, their

FOOTNOTE

[6] The family name was misspelled in the court records.



case was appealed to the Supreme Court of Argentina. In 1979, that Court reversed the lower court's decision, stating: "Said punishment [expulsion] contradicts the constitutional right to learn (Article 14) and the duty of the State to ensure primary education (Article 5)." That victory benefited approximately 1,000 Witness children. Some had their expulsions stopped and others, like young Pablo and Hugo, were readmitted to public schools.

20 Philippines. In 1990, Roel Embralinag,^[7] aged 9, and his sister Emily, aged 10, along with approximately 66 other Witness students, were expelled from school for not saluting the flag. Roel and Emily's father, Leonardo, tried to reason with the school authorities, but to no avail. As matters intensified, Leonardo filed a petition to the Supreme Court. Leonardo had no money and no lawyer to represent him. The family prayed fervently to Jehovah for direction.

Many young Witnesses have proved faithful under test

20, 21. How does the case involving Roel and Emily Embralinag strengthen your faith?

FOOTNOTE

[7] The family name was misspelled as Ebralinag in the court records.

22, 23. (a) Why have we won so many landmark legal victories? (b) Our global, peaceful brotherhood is evidence of what?

All the while, the children were being ridiculed and taunted. Leonardo felt he had no chance of winning the case because he had no legal training.

²¹ As events turned out, the family was represented by Felino Ganal, an attorney who had previously been employed by one of the most reputable law firms in the country. At the time of the case, Brother Ganal had left his corporate work and become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. When the case came before the Supreme Court, the Court unanimously decided in favor of the Witnesses and annulled the expulsion orders. Again, those who tried to break the integrity of God's people failed.

Neutrality Leads to Unity

²² Why have Jehovah's people won so many landmark legal victories? We have no political influence. Yet, in country after country and court after court, fair-minded judges have protected us from the onslaught of tenacious opposers and, in the process, have set precedents in constitutional law. Without a doubt, Christ has backed our efforts to gain those victories. **(Read Revelation 6:2.)** Why do we fight such legal battles? Our intent is not to reform the legal system. Rather, our goal is to ensure that we can continue to serve our King, Jesus Christ, without hindrance.—Acts 4:29.

²³ Amid a world divided by political strife and warped by ingrained hatred, our reigning King, Jesus Christ, has blessed the efforts of his followers worldwide to maintain their neutral stand. Satan has failed in his efforts to divide and conquer us. The Kingdom has gathered millions who refuse to "learn war anymore." The very existence of our global, peaceful brotherhood is a miracle—it provides irrefutable proof that God's Kingdom rules!—Isa. 2:4.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How would you explain why Jehovah's people remain politically neutral?
- What do court victories teach you about God's Kingdom?
- How can you show that you support God's Kingdom and no other?

Fighting for Freedom to Worship

15

ARE you a citizen of God's Kingdom? As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you certainly are! And what is the proof of your citizenship? Not a passport, nor some other government document. Rather, the proof lies in the way that you worship Jehovah God. True worship involves more than what you believe. It involves what you do—your obedience to the laws of God's Kingdom. For all of us, our worship touches every aspect of life, including the way we raise our families and even the way we respond to certain health issues.

² However, the world we live in does not always respect our most cherished citizenship or its requirements. Some governments have tried to restrict our worship or even stamp it out altogether. At times, Christ's subjects have had to fight for the freedom to live by the laws of the Messianic King. Is that surprising? No. Jehovah's people in Bible times often had to fight for the freedom to worship Jehovah.

³ In the days of Queen Esther, for example, God's people had to fight for their very existence. Why? The wicked Prime Minister Haman suggested to Persian King Ahasuerus that all the Jews living in the king's realm be killed because their "laws are different from those of all other peoples." (Esther 3:8, 9, 13) Did Jehovah abandon his servants? No, he blessed the efforts of Esther and Mordecai as they appealed to the Persian king to protect God's people.—Esther 9:20-22.

⁴ What about modern times? As we saw in the preceding chapter, secular powers have, at times, opposed Jehovah's Witnesses. In this chapter, we will discuss some ways in which such governments have tried to restrict our way of worship. We will focus on three general areas: (1) our right to exist as an organization and to worship as we

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

How Christ has helped his followers to fight for legal recognition and the right to obey God's laws

1, 2. (a) What is the proof of your citizenship in God's Kingdom? (b) Why have Jehovah's Witnesses sometimes had to fight for religious freedom?

3. What fight did God's people face in Queen Esther's day?

4. What will we discuss in this chapter?

5. Legal recognition offers what benefits to true Christians?

6. Jehovah's Witnesses in Australia faced what challenge in the early 1940's?

7, 8. Describe the fight for freedom of worship that our brothers in Russia have waged over the years.

choose, (2) the freedom to choose medical treatment in harmony with Bible principles, and (3) the right of parents to raise children according to Jehovah's standards. In each area, we will see how loyal citizens of the Messianic Kingdom have struggled valiantly to guard their precious citizenship and how their efforts have been blessed.

Struggling for Legal Recognition and Basic Freedoms

⁵ Do we need legal recognition from human governments in order to worship Jehovah? No, but legal recognition makes it easier for us to carry on our worship—for example, to meet freely in our own Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls, to print and import Bible literature, and to share the good news with our neighbors openly, without hindrance. In many countries, Jehovah's Witnesses are legally registered and enjoy the same freedoms to worship as do the adherents of other legally recognized religions. What, though, has happened when governments have denied legal recognition or have tried to restrict our basic freedoms?

⁶ **Australia.** In the early 1940's, the governor-general of Australia deemed our beliefs "prejudicial" to the war effort. A ban was imposed. Witnesses were unable to meet or preach openly, Bethel operations were closed down, and Kingdom Halls were seized. Merely possessing our Bible literature was prohibited. After operating in secret for several years, the Australian Witnesses found relief at last. On June 14, 1943, the High Court of Australia reversed the ban.

⁷ **Russia.** Jehovah's Witnesses spent decades under Communist ban but were finally registered in 1991. After the breakup of the former Soviet Union, we were granted legal recognition in the Russian Federation in 1992. Before long, however, some opposers—particularly those associated with the Russian Orthodox Church—were unnerved by the rapid growth in our numbers. Opposers filed a series of five criminal complaints against Jehovah's Witnesses between 1995 and 1998. Each time, the prosecutor found no evidence of wrongdoing. The determined opposers then filed a civil complaint in 1998. The Witnesses prevailed at first, but the opposers rejected the verdict and the Witnesses lost on the appeal in May 2001. A retrial began in October of that year, leading to a decision in 2004 to liquidate the registered legal entity that the Witnesses use in Moscow and ban its activities.

⁸ A wave of persecution followed. (**Read 2 Timothy 3: 12.**) Witnesses faced harassment and assault. Religious literature was confiscated; renting or building houses of worship was severely restricted. Imagine how our brothers and sisters felt as they faced those hardships! The Witnesses had applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2001, and they submitted additional information to the Court in 2004. In 2010, the ECHR reached its decision. The Court saw clearly that religious intolerance was behind Russia's ban on the Witnesses and ruled that there was no reason to uphold the decisions of the lower courts, since there had been no evidence of wrongdoing on the part of any Witnesses. The Court further noted that the ban was designed to strip the Witnesses of their legal rights. The Court's decision upheld the Witnesses' right of freedom of religion. Although various Russian authorities have failed to comply with the ECHR ruling, God's people in that land have drawn great courage from such victories.

⁹ **Greece.** In 1983, Titos Manoussakis rented a room in Heraklion, Crete, so that a small group of Jehovah's Witnesses could meet there for worship. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Soon, though, an Orthodox priest filed a complaint with government authorities, protesting the Witnesses' use of the room for worship. Why? Simply because the Witnesses' beliefs differ from those of the Orthodox Church! Authorities initiated criminal proceedings against Titos Manoussakis and three other local Witnesses. They were fined and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. As loyal citizens of God's Kingdom, the Witnesses considered the court's judgment to be a violation of their freedom to worship, so they pursued their case through the domestic courts and eventually applied to the ECHR.

¹⁰ Finally, in 1996, the ECHR delivered a stunning blow to opposers of pure worship. The Court noted that "Jehovah's Witnesses come within the definition of 'known religion' as provided for under Greek law" and that the lower courts' decisions had a "direct effect on applicants' freedom of religion." The Court further found that it was not up to the government of Greece to "determine whether religious beliefs or the means used to express such beliefs are legitimate." The sentences against the Witnesses were overturned, and their freedom of worship was upheld!

¹¹ Did that victory settle matters in Greece? Sadly, no. In 2012, a similar case was finally settled in Kassandreia, Greece, after a nearly 12-year-long legal battle. In this

9-11. In Greece, how have Jehovah's people struggled for the freedom to worship together, and what have been the results?



Titos Manoussakis
(See paragraph 9)

12, 13. In France, how have opposers tried to frame “trouble in the name of the law,” and with what result?

14. How can you play a part in the fight for freedom of worship?

You can pray regularly for your spiritual brothers and sisters who are currently suffering on account of legal injustices

case the opposition was mounted by an Orthodox bishop. The Council of State, the highest administrative court of Greece, settled the matter in favor of God’s people. The decision cited Greece’s own constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and refuted the oft repeated charge that Jehovah’s Witnesses are not a known religion. The Court stated: “The doctrines of ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’ are not hidden and, consequently, they profess a known religion.” Members of the small congregation in Kassandreia rejoice that they are now able to hold meetings for worship in their own Kingdom Hall.

¹² **France.** Some opposers of God’s people have used the tactic of “framing trouble in the name of the law.” (**Read Psalm 94:20.**) For example, in the mid-1990’s, tax authorities in France began an audit of the finances of the *Association Les Témoins de Jehovah* (ATJ), one of the legal entities under which Jehovah’s Witnesses operate in France. The minister of the budget revealed the true objective of the audit: “The audit could lead to judicial liquidation or criminal proceedings . . . , which would likely destabilize the association’s operations or force it to cease its activities in our territory.” Although the audit turned up no irregularities, the tax authorities levied a crippling tax against ATJ. If successful, the tactic would have left our brothers with little choice but to close the branch office and sell the buildings in order to pay the huge tax. It was a heavy blow, but God’s people did not give up. The Witnesses vigorously protested this unjust treatment, ultimately submitting the case to the ECHR in 2005.

¹³ The Court handed down its judgment on June 30, 2011. It reasoned that the right to freedom of religion should prevent the State, except in extreme cases, from assessing the legitimacy of religious beliefs or the way they are expressed. Further, the Court stated: “The taxation . . . had the effect of cutting off the association’s vital resources, thereafter preventing it from ensuring its adherents the free exercise of their worship in its practical aspects.” The Court unanimously decided in favor of Jehovah’s Witnesses! To the delight of Jehovah’s people, the French government finally returned the tax levied against ATJ with interest and, in compliance with the Court’s order, removed the liens on the branch property.

¹⁴ Like Esther and Mordecai of old, Jehovah’s people today fight for the freedom to worship Jehovah in the way that

he has commanded. (Esther 4:13-16) Can you have a part? Yes. You can pray regularly for your spiritual brothers and sisters who are currently suffering on account of legal injustices. Such prayers can be a powerful aid to our brothers and sisters under hardship and persecution. **(Read James 5:16.)** Does Jehovah act on such prayers? Our victories in court suggest that he certainly does!—Heb. 13:18, 19.

Freedom to Choose Medical Treatment in Harmony With Our Beliefs

¹⁵ As we noted in Chapter 11, citizens of God's Kingdom have received clear Scriptural guidance to avoid the misuse of blood, which has become so common today. (Gen. 9:5, 6; Lev. 17:11; **read Acts 15:28, 29.**) Although we do not accept blood transfusions, we want the best medical care possible for ourselves and our loved ones as long as such treatment does not conflict with God's laws. The highest courts of many nations have recognized that people have the right to choose or to refuse medical treatment as their conscience and religious beliefs require. In some lands, however, God's people have faced daunting challenges in this regard. Consider some examples.

¹⁶ **Japan.** Misae Takeda, a 63-year-old housewife in Japan, needed major surgery. As a loyal citizen of God's Kingdom, she made clear to her doctor that she wanted to be treated without blood. Yet, months later, she was shocked to learn that she had been given a blood transfusion during her surgery. Feeling violated and deceived, Sister Takeda filed a lawsuit against the doctors and the hospital in June 1993. This modest, soft-spoken woman had unshakable faith. She gave bold testimony before a full courtroom, remaining on the witness stand for over an hour despite her failing strength. She appeared in court for the last time just a month before she died. Do we not admire her courage and faith? Sister Takeda said that she constantly petitioned Jehovah for his blessing on her fight. She was confident that her prayers would be answered. Were they?

¹⁷ Three years after Sister Takeda died, the Supreme Court of Japan ruled in her favor—agreeing that it was wrong to give her a blood transfusion against her express wishes. The February 29, 2000, decision stated that “the right to decide” in such cases “must be respected as personal rights.” Thanks to Sister Takeda's determination to fight for her freedom to choose medical treatment in harmony with her Bible-trained conscience, Witnesses in Japan

15. What factors do God's people take into account regarding the use of blood?

16, 17. What medical treatment did a sister in Japan receive that proved shocking to her, and how were her prayers answered?



Pablo Albarracini
(See paragraphs 18 to 20)

18-20. (a) How did a court of appeals in Argentina uphold a person's right to refuse blood transfusions through use of a medical directive? (b) Regarding the misuse of blood, how might we show submission to Christ's leadership?

21-24. (a) How did the Supreme Court of Canada come to make a remarkable decision regarding minors and the use of blood? (b) How might this case encourage young servants of Jehovah?



April Cadoreth
(See paragraphs 21 to 24)

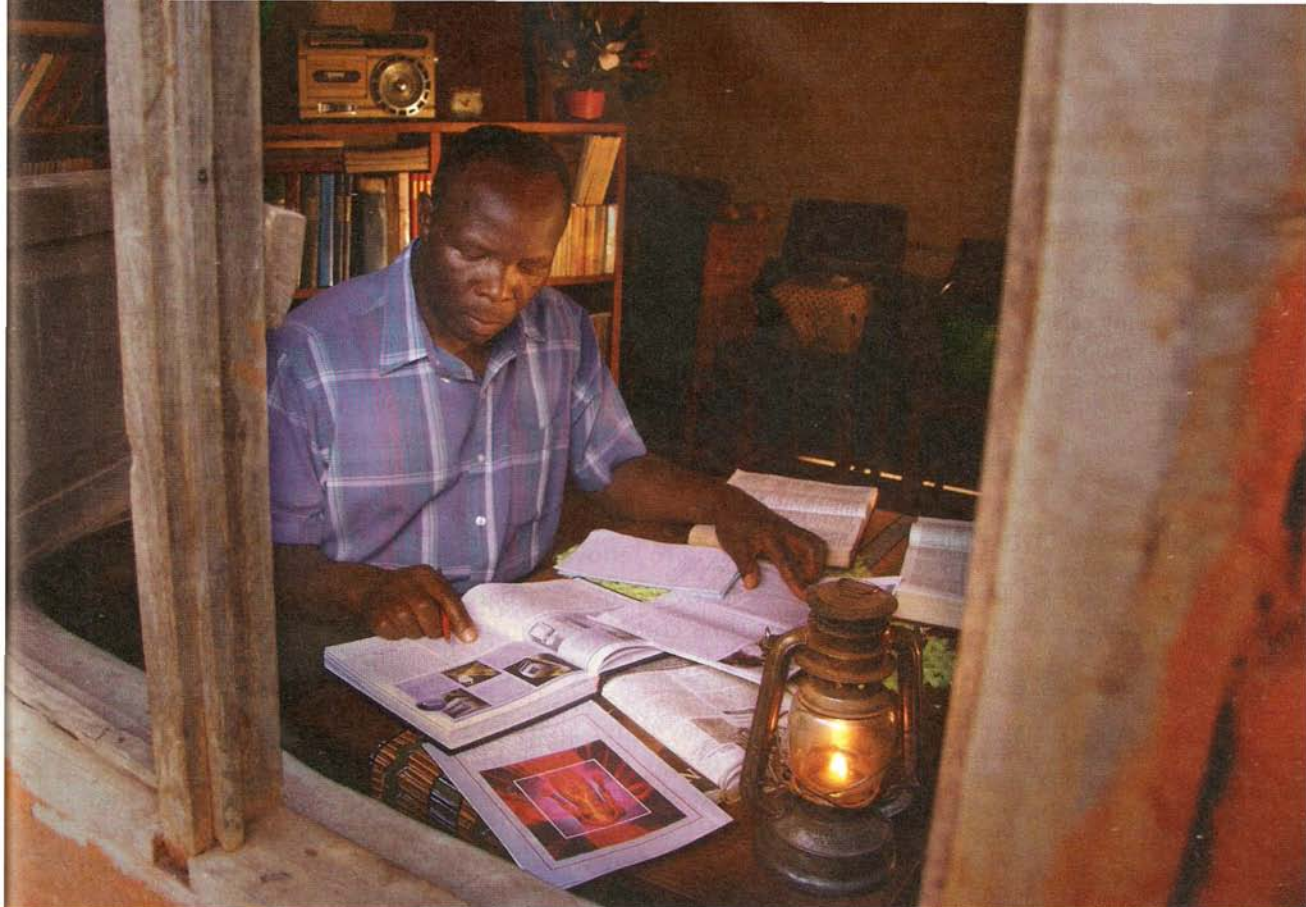
can now receive medical treatment without the fear of a forced blood transfusion.

18 Argentina. How can citizens of the Kingdom prepare in case a medical decision needs to be made while they are unconscious? We can carry on our person a legal document that will speak for us, as Pablo Albarracini did. In May 2012, he was the victim of an attempted robbery and was shot multiple times. He was admitted to the hospital unconscious and was thus unable to explain his stand regarding blood transfusions. However, he had with him a duly executed medical directive he had signed more than four years earlier. Although his condition was serious and some doctors felt that to save his life, blood transfusion was necessary, the medical staff was prepared to honor his wishes. However, Pablo's father, who was not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, obtained a court order to overturn his son's wishes.

19 The attorney representing Pablo's wife immediately filed an appeal. Within hours, the court of appeals overturned the lower court's order and ruled that the patient's wishes, as expressed in the medical directive, should be respected. Pablo's father appealed to Argentina's Supreme Court. However, the Supreme Court could find "no reasons to doubt that [Pablo's medical directive expressing his refusal of a blood transfusion] was formulated with discernment, intention and freedom." The Court stated: "Every capable and adult person has the ability to grant advance directives on [his] health, and may accept or reject certain medical treatments . . . These directives must be accepted by the doctor in charge."

20 Brother Albarracini has since recovered fully. He and his wife are grateful that he had completed a medical directive. By taking that simple—yet important—step, he showed his submission to Christ's rulership through God's Kingdom. Have you and your family taken similar measures?

21 Canada. Generally, courts recognize the rights of parents to determine the best medical care for their children. At times, courts have even ruled that a mature minor should be accorded respect when it comes to making medical decisions. That was true of April Cadoreth. At the age of 14, April was admitted to a hospital with severe internal bleeding. A few months earlier, she had completed an Advance Medical Directive card with written instructions that blood transfusions should not be administered to her even in the event of an emergency. The attending physician chose to ignore April's clearly expressed wishes and sought



a court order to give her blood. She was forcibly transfused with three units of packed red blood cells. April later likened the experience to rape.

²² April and her parents turned to the courts for justice. After two years, the case came before the Supreme Court of Canada. Though April technically lost her constitutional challenge, the Court awarded her legal costs and ruled in favor of her and other mature minors who seek to exercise their right to decide for themselves their own medical treatment. The Court stated: "In the context of medical treatment, young people under 16 should be permitted to attempt to demonstrate that their views about a particular medical treatment decision reflect a sufficient degree of independence of thought and maturity."

²³ This case is significant in that the Supreme Court addressed the constitutional rights of mature minors. Before this ruling, a Canadian court could authorize medical treatment on a child under 16 as long as the court felt that

Have you filled out your own medical directive?

25, 26. What situation sometimes arises in the wake of a divorce?

27, 28. How did the Supreme Court of Ohio respond to the charge that being raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses is harmful to a child?

“To know that I’ve had a small part in trying to glorify God’s name and prove Satan a liar has truly made me happy”

the treatment was in the best interests of the child. But after this ruling, a court cannot authorize any treatment against the will of young people under the age of 16 without first offering them the chance to prove that they are mature enough to make their own decisions.

²⁴ Was the three-year battle worth the effort? According to April, “Yes!” Now a regular pioneer and in good health, she says: “To know that I’ve had a small part in trying to glorify God’s name and prove Satan a liar has truly made me happy.” April’s experience shows that our young ones can take a courageous stand, proving themselves genuine citizens of God’s Kingdom.—Matt. 21:16.

Freedom to Raise Children According to Jehovah’s Standards

²⁵ Jehovah entrusts parents with the responsibility to raise their children according to his standards. (Deut. 6:6-8; Eph. 6:4) That assignment is challenging, but it may become far more so in the event of a divorce. Views on parenting may differ sharply. For example, a Witness parent feels strongly that a child should be raised according to Christian standards, whereas a non-Witness parent may disagree. Of course, the Witness parent should respectfully recognize that while divorce may sever the marital relationship, the parental relationship remains intact.

²⁶ The non-Witness parent may petition a court for custody of the child or children so that he or she can control their religious upbringing. Some allege that being raised as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses is harmful. They may contend that the children will be deprived of birthday celebrations, holiday festivities and, in the event of a medical emergency, a “lifesaving” blood transfusion. Thankfully, most courts consider what is in the best interests of the child instead of judging whether they consider the religion of one parent to be harmful. Let us look at some examples.

²⁷ **United States.** In 1992, the Supreme Court of Ohio considered a case in which the non-Witness father claimed that it would be harmful to his young son if he was raised as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The lower court had agreed, granting custody to the father. The mother, Jennifer Pater, was granted visitation rights, but she was directed not to “teach or expose the child to the Jehovah[']s Witnesses’ beliefs in any form.” This order from the lower court was so broad that it could be interpreted to mean that Sister Pater could not even talk with her son, Bobby, about the Bi-

ble or its moral standards! Can you imagine her feelings? Jennifer was devastated, but she says that she learned to be patient and to wait on Jehovah to act. She recalls, "Jehovah was always right there." Her attorney, aided by Jehovah's organization, appealed to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

28 The court disagreed with the decision of the lower court, stating that "parents have a fundamental right to educate their children, including the right to communicate their moral and religious values." The court stated that unless it could be shown that the religious values endorsed by Jehovah's Witnesses would harm the physical and mental well-being of the child, the court had no right to restrict a parent's custody rights on the basis of religion. The court found no proof that the Witnesses' religious beliefs would adversely affect the mental or physical health of the child.

29 Denmark. Anita Hansen found herself facing a similar challenge when her former husband petitioned a court to gain custody of seven-year-old Amanda. Although the district court granted custody to Sister Hansen in 2000, Amanda's father appealed to the high court, which overturned the district court's ruling and granted him custody. The high court reasoned that because the parents had

29-31. Why did a sister in Denmark lose custody of her daughter, and what did Denmark's Supreme Court decide in the matter?

Many courts have ruled in favor of the custody rights of Christian parents



32. How has the European Court of Human Rights protected Witness parents against discrimination?

33. How might Witness parents apply the principle of Philippians 4:5?

34. How can Christian parents today benefit from the example of the Jews in Nehemiah's day?

conflicting views of life based on their religious beliefs, the father would be in a better position to address those conflicts. Essentially, then, Sister Hansen lost custody of Amanda because of being one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

³⁰ Throughout this difficult ordeal, Sister Hansen was at times so distraught that she did not know what to pray for. "But," she relates, "the thoughts in Romans 8:26 and 27 were of great comfort. I always felt that Jehovah understood what I meant. He had his eye on me and was always there for me."—**Read Psalm 32:8; Isaiah 41:10.**

³¹ Sister Hansen appealed to the Supreme Court of Denmark. In its ruling, the Court stated: "The question about custody shall be decided on a concrete assessment of what will be in the best interests of the child." Further, the Court held that a decision about custody should rest on the way each parent handles conflicts, not on the basis of the "doctrines and positions" of Jehovah's Witnesses. To Sister Hansen's great relief, the Court recognized her fitness as a parent and returned the custody of Amanda to her.

³² **Various countries in Europe.** In some cases, legal controversies regarding custody of children have gone beyond the highest national courts. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has considered this issue as well. In two cases, the ECHR acknowledged that lower, national courts had treated Witness and non-Witness parents differently simply on the basis of religion. Calling such treatment discriminatory, the ECHR has ruled that "a distinction based essentially on a difference in religion alone is not acceptable." One Witness mother who benefited from such a decision of the ECHR expressed relief and said, "It hurt so much to be accused of harming my children, when all I was trying to do was give them what I thought was best for them—a Christian upbringing."

³³ Of course, Witness parents facing legal challenges to their right to instill Bible standards in their children's hearts strive to show a spirit of reasonableness. (**Read Philippians 4:5.**) Just as they appreciate having the right to train their children in God's way, so they acknowledge that the non-Witness parent, if he or she chooses, shares the parental responsibilities. How seriously does a Witness parent take the responsibility to train a child?

³⁴ An example from Nehemiah's day is instructive. The Jews worked hard to repair and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. They knew that doing so would protect them and their families from the enemy nations surrounding them. For

that reason, Nehemiah urged them: “Fight for your brothers, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes.” (Neh. 4:14) For those Jews, the fight was worth every effort. Likewise today, parents who are Jehovah’s Witnesses work hard to raise their children in the way of the truth. They know that their children are bombarded by unwholesome influences at school and in the neighborhood. Such influences may even creep into the home environment through the media. Parents, never forget that it is worth every effort to fight for your sons and daughters so as to provide a secure environment in which they will flourish spiritually.

Be Confident in Jehovah’s Support of True Worship

³⁵ Jehovah has surely blessed the efforts of his modern-day organization in the fight for the right to worship freely. In pressing such legal issues, God’s people have often been able to give a powerful witness in court and to the public at large. (Rom. 1:8) A side benefit of their many legal victories is that they have reinforced the civil rights of many non-Witnesses. However, as God’s people, we are not social reformers; nor are we interested in self-vindication. Above all, Jehovah’s Witnesses have pursued their legal rights in the courts in an effort to establish and advance pure worship.—**Read Philippians 1:7.**

³⁶ May we never take for granted the lessons of faith we can learn from those who have fought for the freedom to worship Jehovah! Let us remain faithful as well, confident that Jehovah is supporting our work and continues to give us the strength to do his will.—Isa. 54:17.

35, 36. What benefits have come to Jehovah’s Witnesses as a result of our fighting for our legal rights, and what is your determination?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How have some governments tried to limit basic Christian freedoms, and with what result?
- In what ways have Jehovah’s Witnesses fought for the right to reject blood transfusions, and how has God blessed their efforts?
- What have opposers sometimes tried to do regarding the children of Witness parents in the wake of divorce?
- What leads you to believe that God’s Kingdom is behind our record of legal victories?

Left:
Open-air meeting
held in London,
England, 1945

Right:
Special assembly day
in Malawi,
Africa, 2012



SECTION 5

KINGDOM EDUCATION

Training Servants
of the King



YOU smile encouragingly at the speaker on the platform. He is a young brother from your congregation, and he is giving his first part on an assembly program. As you enjoy his talk, you cannot help but marvel at the training God's people receive. You remember this young man's first efforts on the platform—and look how far he has come! He was trained in the Theocratic Ministry School and then in the Pioneer Service School. Most recently, he and his wife enjoyed attending the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. While applauding the brother's excellent talk, you look around and

think of the instruction that all of God's people receive.

The Bible foretold a time when God's people would all be "taught by Jehovah." (Isa. 54:13) We are living during that time. We receive education not only through our publications but also through our meetings, assemblies, conventions, and the various schools designed to prepare us for particular assignments in Jehovah's organization. In this section, we will consider how all of this education provides solid proof that God's Kingdom is ruling today.

16

Meeting Together for Worship

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Tracing the development and importance of our meetings

1. When the disciples gathered together, what help did they receive, and why did they need it?
2. (a) How does Jehovah give us strength, and why do we need it? (b) Why is the Family Worship arrangement so important? (See the footnote and the box "Family Worship," page 175.)
- 3, 4. What does Jehovah require of his people? Give examples.

FOOTNOTE

[1] In addition to our weekly congregation meetings, each family or each individual is encouraged to put aside time for personal study or family worship.

SHORTLY after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples gathered to encourage one another. However, they locked the doors out of fear of their enemies. How their fear must have dissipated when Jesus appeared in their midst and said: "Receive holy spirit"! (**Read John 20:19-22.**) Later, the disciples again gathered together, and Jehovah poured out holy spirit upon them. What strength they received for the preaching work that lay ahead!—Acts 2:1-7.

² We face challenges similar to those of our first-century brothers. (1 Pet. 5:9) At times, some of us may suffer from fear of man. And we need the strength that Jehovah gives if we are to endure in the preaching work. (Eph. 6:10) Jehovah provides much of that strength through our meetings. We currently have the opportunity to attend five weekly meetings—the Public Meeting, the *Watchtower* Study, the Congregation Bible Study, the Theocratic Ministry School, and the Service Meeting.^[1] We also enjoy four annual events—a district convention, a circuit assembly, a special assembly day, and the Memorial of Christ's death. Why is it vital that we attend all those meetings? How did our modern-day meetings develop? And what does our attitude toward meetings reveal about us?

Why Meet Together?

³ Jehovah has long required that his people meet together to worship him. For example, in 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah gave his Law to the nation of Israel, and that Law included a weekly Sabbath so that each family could worship him and be instructed in the Law. (Deut. 5:12; 6:4-9) When the Israelites followed that command, families were strengthened and the nation as a whole remained spiritually clean and strong. When the nation failed to apply the Law, neglecting such requirements as meeting regularly for wor-

ship of Jehovah, they lost God's favor.—Lev. 10:11; 26:31-35; 2 Chron. 36:20, 21.

⁴ Consider, too, the example Jesus set. He had the custom of going to the synagogue each week on the Sabbath. (Luke 4:16) After Jesus' death and resurrection, his disciples continued the custom of meeting together regularly even though they were no longer under the Sabbath law. (Acts 1:6, 12-14; 2:1-4; Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:13, 14) At those meetings, first-century Christians not only received instruction and encouragement but also offered sacrifices of praise to God by means of their prayers, comments, and songs.—Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15.

⁵ Likewise, when we attend our weekly meetings and annual assemblies and conventions, we show our support for God's Kingdom, receive strength from holy spirit, and encourage others by our expressions of faith. More important, we have the opportunity to worship Jehovah by means of our prayers, comments, and songs. The structure of our meetings may be different from that of those attended by the Israelites and the first-century Christians, but our gatherings are equally important. How did our modern-day meetings develop?

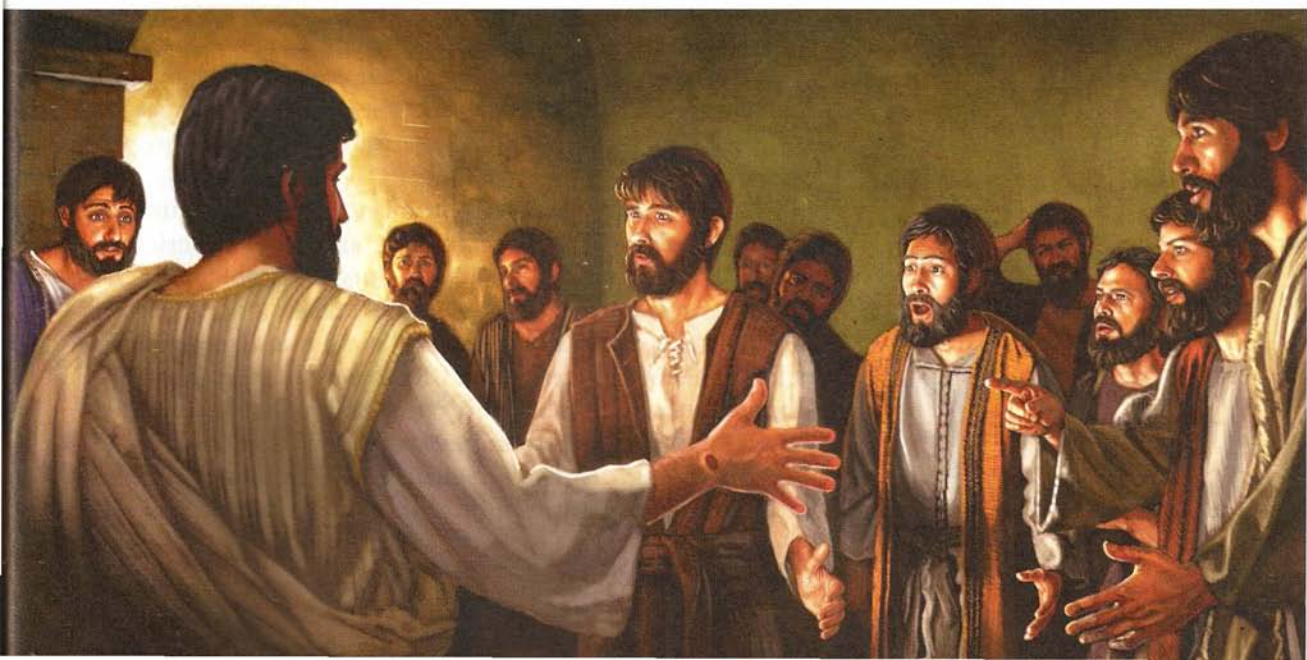
Weekly Meetings That Encourage "Love and Fine Works"

⁶ When Brother Charles Taze Russell began searching for the truth from God's Word, he saw the need to meet with others who had the same goal. In 1879, Russell wrote:

5. Why do we attend weekly meetings and annual assemblies and conventions? (See also the box "Annual Gatherings That Unite God's People," page 176.)

6, 7. (a) What is the purpose of our meetings? (b) How did meetings vary from one group to another?

Jesus' disciples met together to strengthen and encourage one another



8. What were some themes of early public lectures?

9. How has the Public Meeting changed over the years, and how can you support this meeting?

"I, in company with others in Pittsburgh, organized and maintained a bible class for the searching of the Scriptures, meeting every Sunday." Readers of *Zion's Watch Tower* were encouraged to meet together, and by 1881, meetings were being held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, every Sunday and Wednesday. The November 1895 issue of the *Watch Tower* said that the purpose of those meetings was to cultivate "Christian fellowship, love and communion" and to give the opportunity to those attending to encourage one another.—**Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.**

⁷ For many years, the structure and frequency of the meetings varied from one group of Bible Students to another. For example, a letter from a group in the United States that was published in 1911 said: "We hold at least five meetings each week." They held those meetings on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and twice on Sunday. Another letter, from a group in Africa, that was published in 1914 said: "We hold meetings twice a month, beginning on Friday and lasting over Sunday." In time, however, the current format of our meetings emerged. Consider briefly the history of each meeting.

⁸ **Public Meeting.** In 1880, the year after Brother Russell began publishing *Zion's Watch Tower*, he followed the example set by Jesus and embarked on a preaching tour. (Luke 4:43) In the process, Brother Russell set a pattern for what has become our current Public Meeting. Announcing the trip, the *Watch Tower* said that Russell "would be glad to address public meetings on '*Things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*'" In 1911, after classes, or congregations, had been set up in a number of countries, each class was encouraged to send out suitable speakers to surrounding areas to give a series of six lectures on topics such as judgment and the ransom. At the end of each talk, the name of the speaker and the theme of the talk for the following week were announced.

⁹ In 1945, *The Watchtower* announced the beginning of a global Public Meeting campaign involving a series of eight Bible lectures that dealt with "urgent problems of the times." For many decades, assigned speakers not only used the topics supplied by the faithful slave but also delivered talks that they had developed themselves. In 1981, however, all speakers were directed to base their talks on the outlines supplied to the congregations.^[2] Until 1990, some outlines for public discourses called for audience participation or demonstrations; but in that year the instructions

FOOTNOTE

[2] By 2013, more than 180 outlines for public talks were available.



Watch Tower Study,
Ghana, 1931

were amended, and public discourses were from then on delivered only as talks. A further adjustment came in January 2008 when public talks were reduced from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. Even though changes to the format have been made, well-prepared public talks continue to build faith in God's Word and to educate us about various aspects of the Kingdom of God. (1 Tim. 4:13, 16) Do you enthusiastically invite those on whom you make return visits and other non-Witnesses to hear those important Bible-based discourses?

¹⁰ *Watchtower Study*. In 1922, brothers known as pilgrims—ministers sent by the Watch Tower Society to give talks to the congregations and take the lead in the preaching work—recommended that a regular meeting be devoted to a study of *The Watch Tower*. This suggestion was adopted, and at first, *Watch Tower* studies were held either midweek or on Sunday.

¹¹ The June 15, 1932, *Watchtower* provided further direction on how this meeting should be conducted. Using as a model the study that was conducted in the Bethel Home, the article stated that a brother should lead the meeting. Three brothers could sit at the front of the meeting place and take turns reading the paragraphs. Articles at that time did not include printed questions, so the conductor was told to ask the audience to raise questions on the material under consideration. After that, he would call on people in the audience to give answers to those questions. If further clarification was needed, the conductor was directed to offer a "brief and succinct" explanation.

10-12. (a) What changes has the format of the *Watchtower Study* undergone? (b) What questions would you do well to ask?

13, 14. What is the history of the Congregation Bible Study, and what do you enjoy about this meeting?

¹² Initially, each congregation was permitted to select the issue of the magazine that the majority wanted to study. However, the April 15, 1933, *Watchtower* suggested that all congregations use the current issue. In 1937, direction was given that the study should be held on Sunday. Further refinements that restructured the meeting into the form we know today were published in the October 1, 1942, *Watchtower*. First, the magazine announced that questions would appear at the bottom of each page of the study articles and that those questions should be used. Then, it stated that the meeting should be one hour long. It also encouraged those who answered to express themselves “in their own words” instead of reading portions of the paragraph. The *Watchtower* Study continues to be the primary meeting through which the faithful slave provides spiritual food at the proper time. (Matt. 24:45) Each of us does well to ask: ‘Do I prepare for the study of *The Watchtower* each week? And do I endeavor to comment if I am able?’

¹³ Congregation Bible Study. In the mid-1890’s, after a number of volumes of *Millennial Dawn* had been released, Brother H. N. Rahn, a Bible Student living in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A., suggested holding “Dawn Circles” for Bible study. At first, these meetings, which were often held in private homes, were an experiment. By September 1895, however, Dawn Circles were being conducted with success in a score of cities in the United States. The *Watch Tower* of that month therefore suggested that all students of the truth hold those meetings. It directed that the one conducting should be a good reader. He was to read a sentence and then wait for those present to comment. After reading each of the sentences in a paragraph and discussing them, he was to look up and read the cited scriptures. At the end of a chapter, each one in attendance was to give a brief review of the material.

¹⁴ The name of this meeting changed several times. It became known as Berean Circles for Bible Study, a reference to the first-century Bereans who carefully examined the Scriptures. (Acts 17:11) In time, the name was changed to Congregation Book Study. Now it is called Congregation Bible Study, and the entire congregation meets together at the Kingdom Hall rather than in groups in private homes. Over the decades, various books, brochures, and even *Watch Tower* articles have been used as a basis for study. From the early days, all who attended were encouraged to take part in the meeting. This meeting has done much to deepen our

FAMILY WORSHIP

AS THE last days have progressed, Jehovah's organization has increasingly focused attention on the need for each family to have its own Bible study program. (2 Tim. 3:1) For example, the booklet *Home and Happiness*, published in 1932, forthrightly said: "Let each family begin at once a study of the Bible at home." And the May 15, 1956, *Watchtower* urged all Christian families to have "a regular Bible study right in the home for the benefit of the entire family." Then it asked: "Does your family study *The Watchtower* together some evening before the meeting?"

In 2009, the organization emphasized the importance of family study by adjusting the schedule of midweek meetings; from that time forward, the Congregation Bible Study was to be held on the same night as the Theocratic Ministry School and the Service Meeting. "One reason for this adjustment," stated the January 2011 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, "was to give families an opportunity to fortify their spirituality by scheduling a specific evening each week for family worship." It then said: "Use this time for unhurried Bible discussion and study tailored to the needs of the family."^[1]

Why is the Family Worship arrangement so important—something that should not be missed? Because it affects the spiritual strength

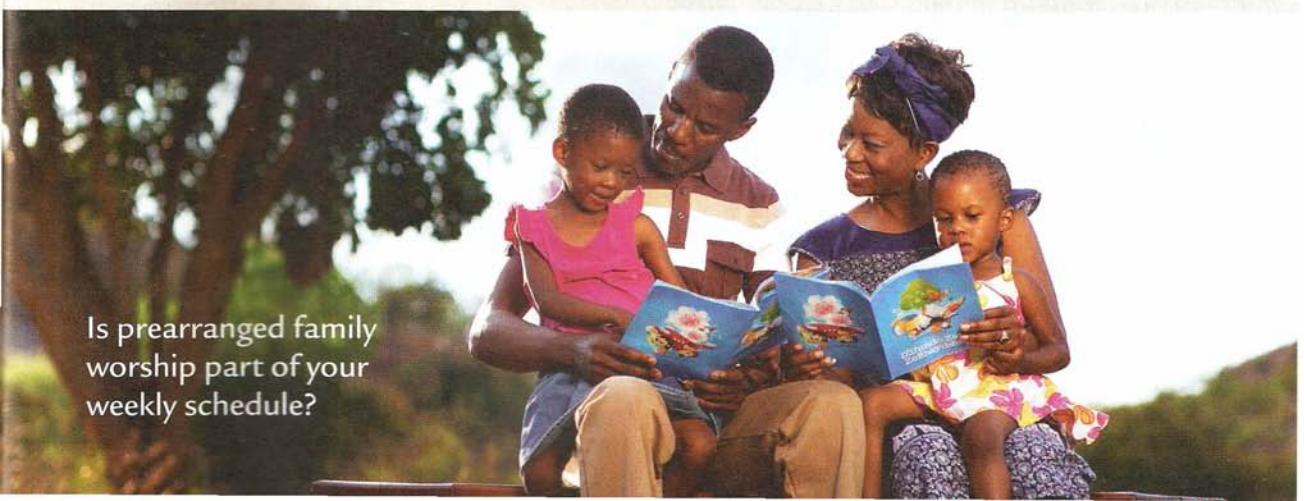
not only of the family but also of the congregation. To illustrate: The congregation could be likened to a house made of bricks. (Read *Hebrews 3:4-6*.)^[2] The strength of a well-designed brick house is determined by two key components—the quality of its foundation and the durability of the individual bricks. If the foundation is flawed, the house will fall. But even a house with a solid foundation will become structurally unsound if the bricks crumble. The Christian congregation is built on the strongest foundation, the teachings of Christ. (Read *1 Corinthians 3:10-15*.)^[3] Individuals and families in a congregation are like the bricks. Family Worship sessions provide a unique opportunity for each individual and each family to build and maintain strong, fire-resistant faith. And strong individuals and strong families result in strong congregations. Is prearranged family worship part of your weekly schedule?

FOOTNOTES

[1] Some suggestions for material that could be used during family worship can be found in the January 2011 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

[2] Paul's words are directed to those who have "the heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) But in principle his counsel applies to all Christians.

[3] For a more detailed discussion of this Bible passage, see the July 15, 1999, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 12-14, paragraphs 15-20. Why not read this material and meditate on how it applies to your Family Worship sessions?



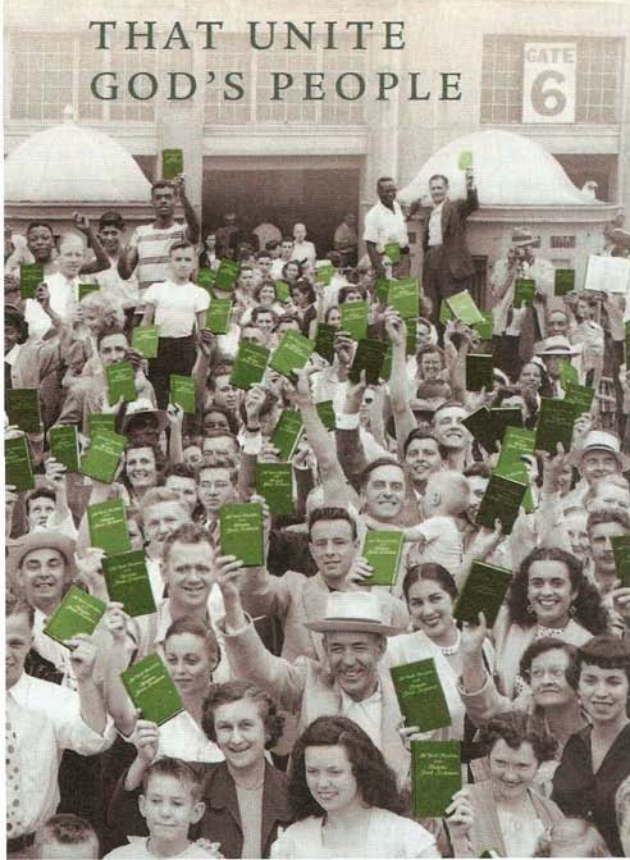
Is prearranged family worship part of your weekly schedule?

15. What is the Theocratic Ministry School designed to do?

knowledge of the Bible. Do you regularly prepare for this meeting and participate in it to the best of your ability?

15 Theocratic Ministry School. "On Monday night, February 16, 1942," recalled Carey Barber, who at that time was serving at the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, "all the male members of the Brooklyn Bethel family were invited to enroll in what would later be known as the Theocratic Ministry School." Brother Barber, who much later became a member of the Governing Body, described the school as "one of the most outstanding developments of Jehovah's dealing with his people in modern times." The course was such a success in helping brothers improve their teaching and preaching skills that beginning in 1943, the booklet *Course in Theocratic Ministry* was gradually made available to congregations worldwide. The June 1, 1943, *Watchtower* said

ANNUAL GATHERINGS THAT UNITE GOD'S PEOPLE



JEHOVAH instructed all Israelite males to gather at Jerusalem three times a year. (Ex. 23:14-17; Lev. 23:34-36) Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph, took his whole family to Jerusalem on such occasions. Other Israelite men likely did the same. God's people today likewise gather three times each year for assemblies and conventions. Some of the conventions have marked outstanding milestones in the development of the earthly part of God's organization during the last days. Consider just some of these conventions and what made them memorable.

1919: Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A.

This was the first major convention after World War I.

The preaching work was revitalized. Production of the magazine *The Golden Age* (now called *Awake!*) was announced.

1922: Cedar Point, Ohio

Impetus was given to the preaching work in the talk on the subject "The Kingdom." This talk introduced the rousing cry "Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his Kingdom"!

that the Theocratic Ministry School was designed to help God's people "train themselves to be better witnesses in the proclamation of the Kingdom."—2 Tim. 2:15.

¹⁶ At first, many found it agonizing to talk in front of a large audience. Clayton Woodworth, Jr., whose father had been unjustly imprisoned with Brother Rutherford and others in 1918, recalled how he felt when he first joined the school in 1943. "It was very difficult for me to give talks," said Brother Woodworth. "My tongue seemed to grow long, my mouth went completely dry, and my voice became something between a roar and a squeak." As Clayton's abilities improved, however, he received many public speaking privileges. The school taught him much more than just technical skills. It taught him the value of humility and the importance of relying on Jehovah. "I came to realize," he said,

16, 17. Does the Theocratic Ministry School teach only technical skills? Explain.

1931: Columbus, Ohio

We adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses.

1935: Washington, D.C.

For the first time, we understood that the "great multitude," mentioned at Revelation 7:9 in the *King James Version*, will live forever on earth.

1942: New World Theocratic Assembly, held in 85 cities worldwide

The discourse "Peace—Can it Last?" provided insight into the prophecy recorded in Revelation chapter 17, showing that after the end of World War II, there would be an opportunity to gather many more subjects of God's Kingdom.

1950: Theocracy's Increase Assembly

The *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was released.

1958: Divine Will International Assembly

This was the largest international convention held in one city; more than 250,000 delegates from 123 lands assembled in New York.

1961: United Worshipers Assembly

The complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was released in one volume.

1992: "Light Bearers" Convention

This was the first international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses held in the former Soviet Union, in St. Petersburg, Russia.

1993: "Divine Teaching" Convention, Kyiv, Ukraine

This was the largest Christian baptism on record at a single convention—7,402 new ministers were baptized.

2011: "Let God's Kingdom Come!" Convention

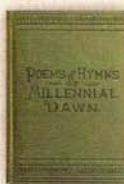
Our understanding of the prophetic image mentioned in Daniel chapter 2 was refined. We now understood that the feet of iron mixed with clay represent the Anglo-American World Power, the one that will still be dominant when God's Kingdom crushes the entire symbolic image.

2014: "Keep Seeking First God's Kingdom!" Convention

Marking the 100th anniversary of Christ's Kingdom in heaven.



1879



1890



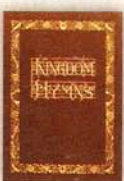
1896



1900



1905



1905



1928



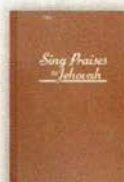
1944



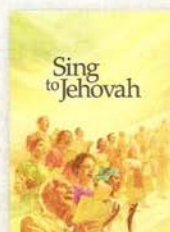
1950



1966



1984



CURRENT

“THE SINGING OF THE TRUTH”

JEHOVAH’S people love to express their devotion to him by singing *about* him and *to* him. For example, when Jehovah delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, the people expressed their gratitude and admiration in a stirring song. (Ex. 15:1-21) Later, singing became an integral part of the worship of Jehovah at the temple. (1 Chron. 23:4, 5; 25:7) In the first century, Jesus and his disciples expressed their feelings for Jehovah in songs of praise.—Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19.

Likewise, during the time since Brother Russell and his associates began rediscovering the truth, we have used numerous collections of songs in our worship of Jehovah. Explaining the important role that singing plays, the February 15, 1896, issue of the *Watch Tower* said: “The singing of the truth is a good way to get it into the heads and hearts of God’s people.”

“that the speaker himself is not important. But if he prepares well and rests all his confidence in Jehovah, he will be heard with pleasure and the hearers will learn something.”

¹⁷ In 1959, sisters were invited to enroll in the school. Sister Edna Bauer recalls hearing the announcement at the assembly she attended. “I remember the excitement it caused among the sisters,” she said. “Now their opportunities were expanded.” Whether you are male or female, have you seized this expanded opportunity to enroll in the Theocratic Ministry School and be taught by Jehovah? —**Read Isaiah 54:13.**

¹⁸ Service Meeting. As early as 1919, meetings were held to organize field service. At the time, not all in the congregation attended those meetings—only those who were directly engaged in distributing literature. For much of the year 1923, a Service Meeting was held once a month, and all in the class, or congregation, were to attend. By 1928, congregations were urged to hold the Service Meeting each week, and in 1935, *The Watchtower* encouraged all congregations to base the Service Meeting on information published in the *Director* (later called *Informant* and now, *Our Kingdom Ministry*). This meeting soon became a regular feature of each congregation’s schedule.

¹⁹ The Service Meeting continues to follow the pattern set by Christ, offering practical guidance for us as we engage in the preaching work. (Matt. 10:5-13) If you qualify to receive a personal copy of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, do you study it and apply the suggestions it contains as you engage in the ministry?

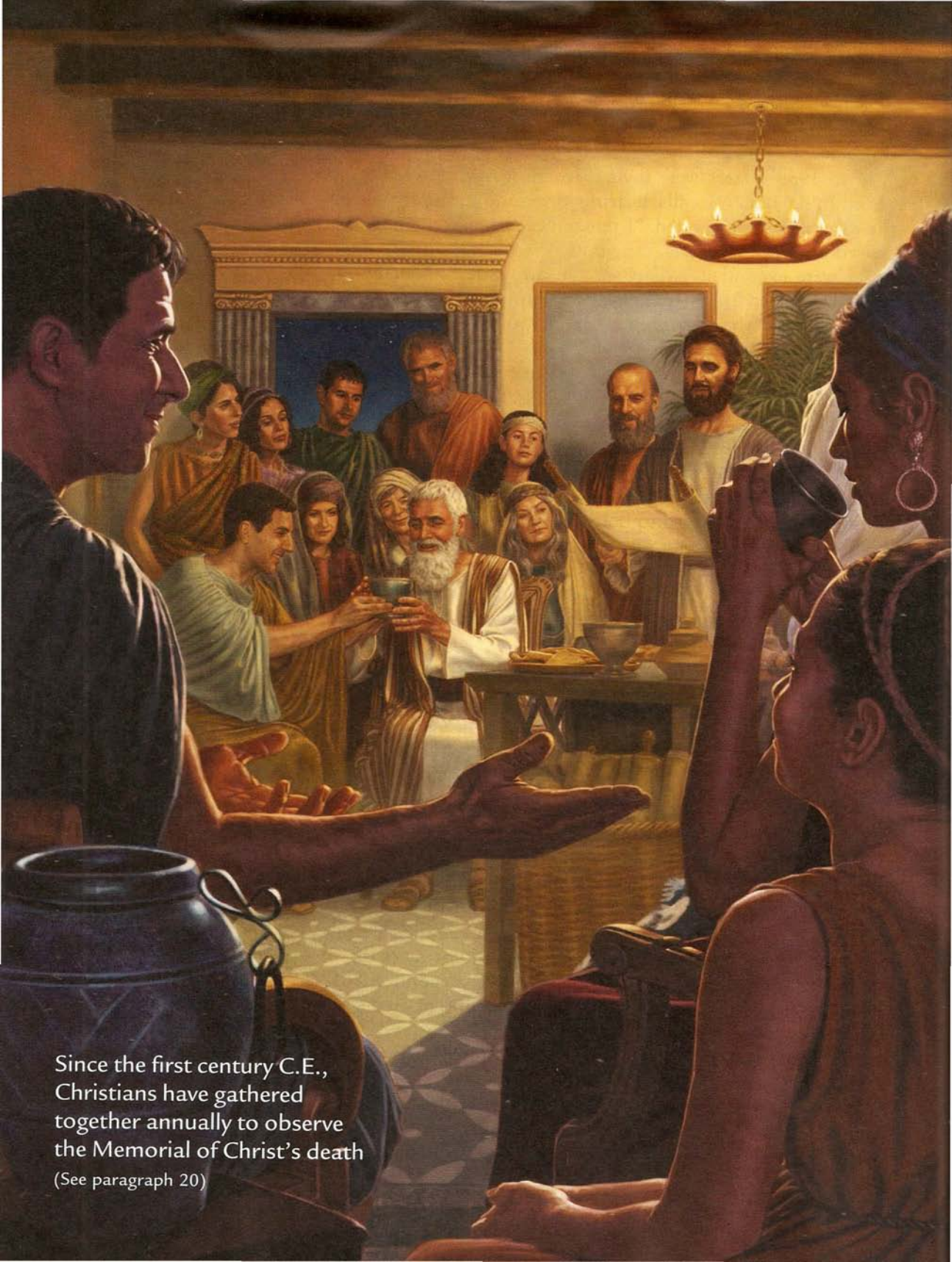
The Most Important Meeting of the Year

²⁰ Jesus told his followers to commemorate his death until his arrival. Like the Passover celebration, the Memorial of Christ’s death is an annual event. (1 Cor. 11:23-26) This meeting draws millions each year. It reminds the anointed of the privilege they have of being joint heirs of the Kingdom. (Rom. 8:17) And in the other sheep, it engenders deep respect for and loyalty to the King of God’s Kingdom.—John 10:16.

²¹ Brother Russell and his associates recognized the importance of commemorating the Lord’s Evening Meal and knew that it should be observed only once each year. The April 1880 issue of the *Watch Tower* said: “It has for several years been the custom of many of us here in Pittsburgh

18, 19. (a) What pattern does the Service Meeting continue to follow? (b) Why do we sing at our meetings? (See the box “The Singing of the Truth.”)

20-22. (a) Why do we commemorate Jesus’ death? (b) What benefit do you gain from attending the Memorial each year?



Since the first century C.E.,
Christians have gathered
together annually to observe
the Memorial of Christ's death
(See paragraph 20)

to . . . remember the Passover [Memorial] and eat the emblems of our Lord's body and blood." Conventions were soon being held in conjunction with the Memorial. The first time records were kept for such an occasion was in 1889, when 225 attended and 22 were baptized.

²² Today, we no longer observe the Memorial as part of a convention program, but we do invite all in whatever community we live in to join us at a local Kingdom Hall or rented facility. In 2013, over 19 million commemorated Jesus' death. What a privilege we have not only to attend the Memorial but also to encourage others to join us on this most sacred night! Do you enthusiastically invite as many as possible to the Memorial each year?

What Our Attitude Reveals

²³ Loyal servants of Jehovah do not view the instruction to meet together as a burden. (Heb. 10:24, 25; 1 John 5:3) King David, for example, loved going to Jehovah's house for worship. (Ps. 27:4) He especially enjoyed doing so in the company of others who loved God. (Ps. 35:18) And think of Jesus' example. Even while young, he felt a deep desire to be in his Father's house of worship.—Luke 2:41-49.

²⁴ When we attend meetings, we show our love for Jehovah and our desire to build up our fellow believers. We also express our longing to learn how to live as subjects of God's Kingdom, for it is primarily at our meetings, assemblies, and conventions that we receive such training. In addition, our meetings provide us with the skill and strength we need to endure in one of the most important activities being carried out by God's Kingdom today—the making and training of disciples of the King Jesus Christ. **(Read Matthew 28:19, 20.)** Without a doubt, the depth of our desire to meet together reveals just how real God's Kingdom is to us as individuals. May we always value our meetings!

23. How do you view our meeting together?

24. When we attend meetings, what opportunities do we have?

The depth of our desire to meet together reveals just how real God's Kingdom is to us

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- Why do we meet together?
- How do you feel about the various meetings?
- What does your attitude toward meetings reveal? Explain.

17

Training Ministers of the Kingdom

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

How theocratic schools prepare Kingdom ministers to fulfill their assignments

- 1-3. How did Jesus expand the preaching work, giving rise to what questions?
4. When and where was Jesus taught by his Father?
5. What instruction did the Father give the Son about the ministry that he would carry out on earth?

FOR two years, Jesus preached throughout Galilee. (**Read Matthew 9:35-38.**) He visited many cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good news of the Kingdom. Wherever he preached, crowds flocked to him. "The harvest is great," Jesus observed, and more workers were needed.

² Jesus arranged to expand the preaching work. How? By sending his 12 apostles "out to preach the Kingdom of God." (Luke 9:1, 2) The apostles may have had questions about how to carry out this work. Before dispatching them, Jesus lovingly gave them something that his heavenly Father had given him—training.

³ A number of questions now come to mind: What training did Jesus receive from his Father? What training did Jesus give his apostles? And what about today—has the Messianic King trained his followers to carry out their ministry? If so, how?

"Just as the Father Taught Me, I Speak"

⁴ Jesus readily acknowledged that he was taught by his Father. During his ministry, Jesus said: "Just as the Father taught me, I speak these things." (John 8:28) When and where was Jesus taught? His training evidently began soon after he—God's firstborn Son—was created. (Col. 1:15) Alongside his Father in the heavens, the Son spent countless ages listening to and observing the "Grand Instructor." (Isa. 30:20) As a result, the Son received a matchless education in the qualities, works, and purposes of his Father.

⁵ In due time, Jehovah taught his Son about the ministry that he would carry out on earth. Consider a prophecy that describes the relationship between the Grand Instruc-

tor and his firstborn Son. (Read Isaiah 50:4, 5.) Jehovah awakened his Son “morning by morning,” says the prophecy. That word picture conveys the idea of a teacher who wakes his pupil up early in the morning in order to teach him. One Bible reference work states: “Jehovah . . . takes him as it were into the school after the manner of a pupil, and teaches him what and how he is to preach.” In that heavenly “school,” Jehovah taught his Son “what to say and what to speak.” (John 12:49) The Father also gave his Son instruction on how to teach.^[1] While on earth, Jesus put his training to good use not only by carrying out *his* ministry but also by training his followers to fulfill *their* ministry.

6 What training did Jesus give his apostles, as mentioned at the outset? According to Matthew chapter 10, he gave them specific ministerial instruction, including the following: where to preach (verses 5, 6), what message to share (verse 7), the need to put their trust in Jehovah (verses 9, 10), how to approach householders (verses 11-13), how to handle rejection (verses 14, 15), and how to respond when persecuted (verses 16-23).^[2] The clear training that Jesus gave his apostles equipped them to spearhead the work of preaching the good news in the first century C.E.

7 What about our day? Jesus, the King of God’s Kingdom, has given his followers the weightiest of assignments, namely, to preach “this good news of the Kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.” (Matt. 24:14) Has the King trained us to carry out this all-important work? Indeed, he has! From heaven, the King has made sure that his followers have received training on how to preach outside the congregation and how to fulfill special responsibilities within it.

Training Ministers to Be Evangelizers

8 Jehovah’s organization has long used assemblies, conventions, and congregation meetings—such as the Service Meeting—to train God’s people for the ministry. Starting in the 1940’s, however, the brothers taking the lead at headquarters began to arrange for training by means of various schools.

9 **Theocratic Ministry School.** As we saw in the preceding chapter, this school began to be conducted in 1943. Is the objective of this school just to train students to give effective talks at congregation meetings? No. The main purpose of the school has always been the same, that is, to

6, 7. (a) What training did Jesus give his apostles, and what did it equip them to do? (b) Jesus has made sure that his followers in our day have received what type of training?

8, 9. (a) What is the main purpose of the Theocratic Ministry School? (b) How has the Theocratic Ministry School helped you to be more effective in your ministry?

FOOTNOTES

[1] How do we know that the Father taught the Son *how* to teach? Consider this: Jesus’ abundant use of illustrations in his teaching fulfilled a prophecy that was recorded centuries before his birth. (Ps. 78:2; Matt. 13:34, 35) Clearly, the Author of that prophecy, Jehovah, determined well in advance that his Son would teach by means of illustrations, or parables. —2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

[2] Months later, Jesus “designated 70 others and sent them out by twos” to preach. He also gave them training. —Luke 10:1-16.

10, 11. Who may now be enrolled in Gilead School, and what is the objective of its curriculum?

12, 13. What effect has Gilead School had on the worldwide preaching work? Give an example.

14. Theocratic schools are powerful proof of what? (See also the box "Schools That Train Kingdom Ministers," page 188.)

train God's people to use their gift of speech to praise Jehovah in the ministry. (Ps. 150:6) The school equips all the brothers and sisters who are enrolled to be more effective Kingdom ministers.

10 Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. What is now called the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead began on Monday, February 1, 1943. The school was originally designed to train pioneers and other full-time servants for missionary service somewhere in the world field. But since October 2011, enrollment is limited to those who are already in some form of special full-time service—special pioneers, traveling overseers and their wives, Bethelites, and field missionaries who have not yet attended the school.

11 What is the objective of the Gilead School curriculum? One longtime instructor answers: "To strengthen the faith of the students by means of a thorough study of God's Word and to help them to develop the spiritual qualities needed to meet successfully the challenges of their assignments. Also, a fundamental objective of the curriculum is to instill in the students a more intense desire to share in the evangelizing work."—Eph. 4:11.

12 What effect has Gilead School had on the worldwide preaching work? Since 1943, over 8,500 individuals have been trained at the school,^[3] and Gilead-trained missionaries have served in over 170 lands worldwide. The missionaries put their training to good use, setting a zealous example in the ministry and training others to do the same. In many cases, the missionaries spearheaded the work in areas that had few if any Kingdom publishers.

13 Consider what happened in Japan, where organized public preaching all but stopped during World War II. By August 1949, there were fewer than ten local publishers in Japan. By the end of that year, however, 13 Gilead-trained missionaries were busy preaching in Japan. Many more missionaries followed. At first, the missionaries concentrated their efforts on larger cities; later, they moved on to other cities. The missionaries heartily encouraged their students and others to join the pioneer ministry. The zealous efforts of the missionaries bore rich results. Now, there are over 216,000 Kingdom proclaimers in Japan, and nearly 40 percent of them serve as pioneers!^[4]

14 Other theocratic schools. The Pioneer Service School, the Bible School for Christian Couples, and the Bible School for Single Brothers have helped those enrolled

FOOTNOTES

[3] Some enrollees have gone through Gilead School more than once.

[4] For more details about the impact that Gilead-trained missionaries have had on the world field, see chapter 23 of the book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*.



to develop spiritually and to take a zealous lead in the evangelizing work.^[5] All these theocratic schools are powerful proof that our King has fully equipped his followers to accomplish their ministry.—2 Tim. 4:5.

Training Brothers to Handle Special Responsibilities

15 Recall Isaiah's prophecy that speaks of Jesus as being instructed by God. In that heavenly "school," the Son learned "how to answer the tired one with the right word." (Isa. 50:4) Jesus applied that instruction; while on earth, he refreshed those who were "toiling and loaded down." (Matt. 11:28-30) In imitation of Jesus, men who serve in positions of responsibility want to be a source of refreshment to their brothers and sisters. To that end, various schools have been established to help qualified brothers to be more effective in serving their fellow believers.

16 **Kingdom Ministry School.** The first class of this school began on March 9, 1959, at South Lansing, New

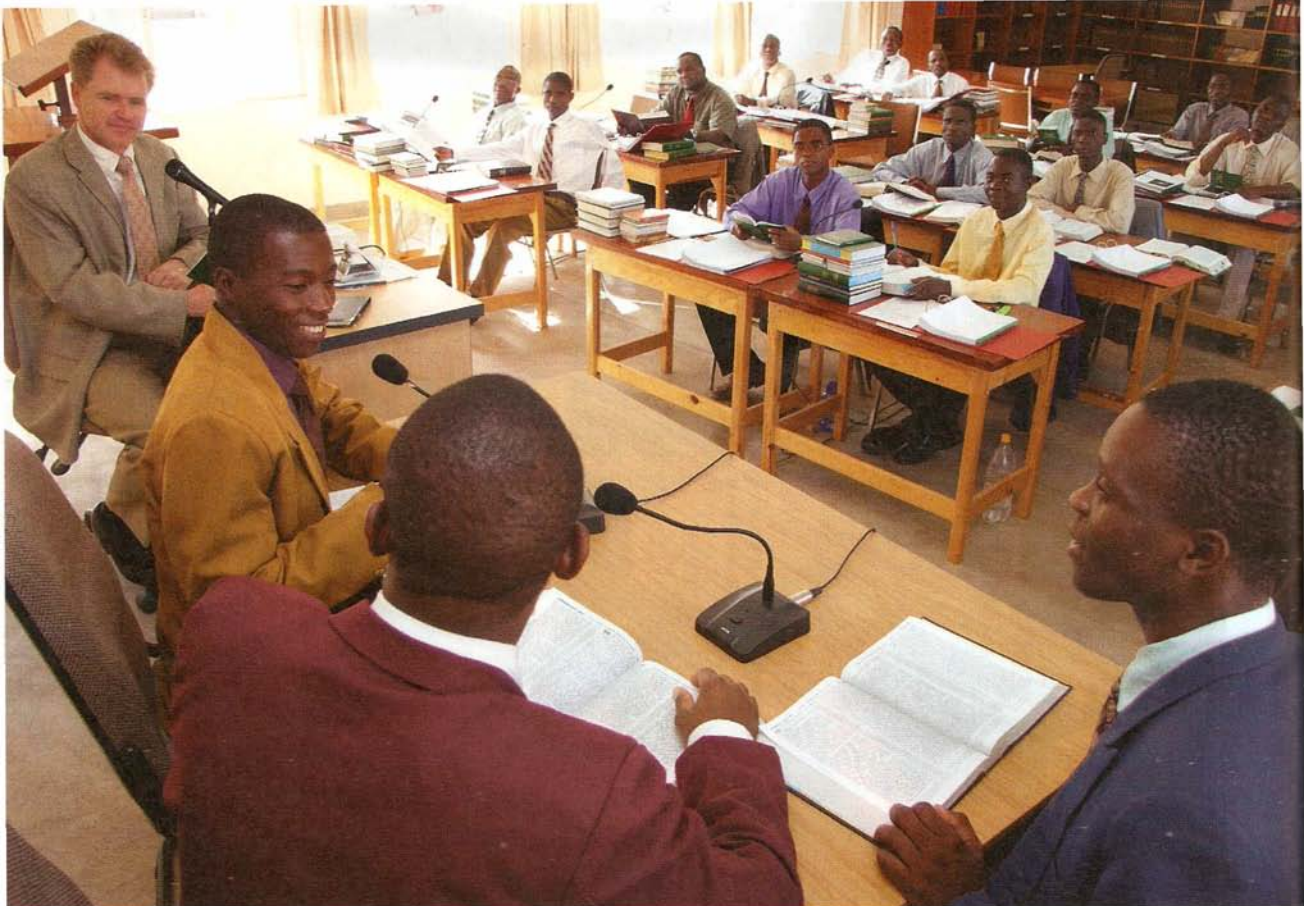
Brother Lloyd Barry teaching Kingdom Ministry School in Japan, 1970

15. Men in positions of responsibility want to imitate Jesus in what way?

16, 17. What is the objective of the Kingdom Ministry School? (See also the footnote.)

FOOTNOTE

[5] The latter two schools have been replaced by the School for Kingdom Evangelizers.



The first class of the Ministerial Training School held in Malawi, 2007

FOOTNOTE

[6] Now all elders benefit from Kingdom Ministry School sessions that are of varying lengths and are held every few years. Since 1984, ministerial servants have also received training at this school.

York. Traveling overseers as well as congregation servants were invited to attend a month-long course. Later the course was translated from English into other languages, and the school gradually began training brothers worldwide.^[6]

¹⁷ Regarding the objective of the Kingdom Ministry School, the 1962 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* stated: "In this very busy world an overseer in the congregation of Jehovah's witnesses must be a man who can organize his life so as to give the proper attention to all in the congregation and be a blessing to them. At the same time he cannot be a man who ignores his own family in favor of the congregation, but he must use the spirit of a sound mind. What a wonderful opportunity has been afforded the congregation servants throughout the world of coming together at the Kingdom Ministry School to get a training that will help them to do just what the Bible says an overseer should be able to accomplish!"—1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.

18 All of God's people have benefited from the Kingdom Ministry School. How so? When elders and ministerial servants apply what they have learned at the school, they, like Jesus, are a source of refreshment to their fellow believers. Do you not appreciate a kind word, a listening ear, or an encouraging visit from a caring elder or ministerial servant? (1 Thess. 5:11) Such qualified men are a real blessing to their congregations!

19 Other theocratic schools. The Teaching Committee of the Governing Body supervises other schools that provide training for brothers in positions of responsibility within the organization. Those schools are designed to help responsible brothers—congregation elders, traveling overseers, and Branch Committee members—to become more effective in fulfilling their many responsibilities. The Bible-based courses encourage the brothers to maintain their own spirituality and to apply Scriptural principles in their dealings with the precious sheep that Jehovah has entrusted to their care.—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

20 Clearly, the Messianic King has made sure that his followers are well-trained. All of the training has come from the top down: Jehovah trained his Son, and the Son has trained his followers. Hence, Jesus could say that we are all “taught by Jehovah.” (John 6:45; Isa. 54:13) Let us be determined to take full advantage of the training that our King has made available to us—whether at the Theocratic Ministry School, the other congregation meetings, or any of the other schools discussed in this chapter. And let us remember that the main purpose of all this training is to help us keep spiritually strong so that we may fully accomplish our ministry.

18. How do all of God's people benefit from the Kingdom Ministry School?

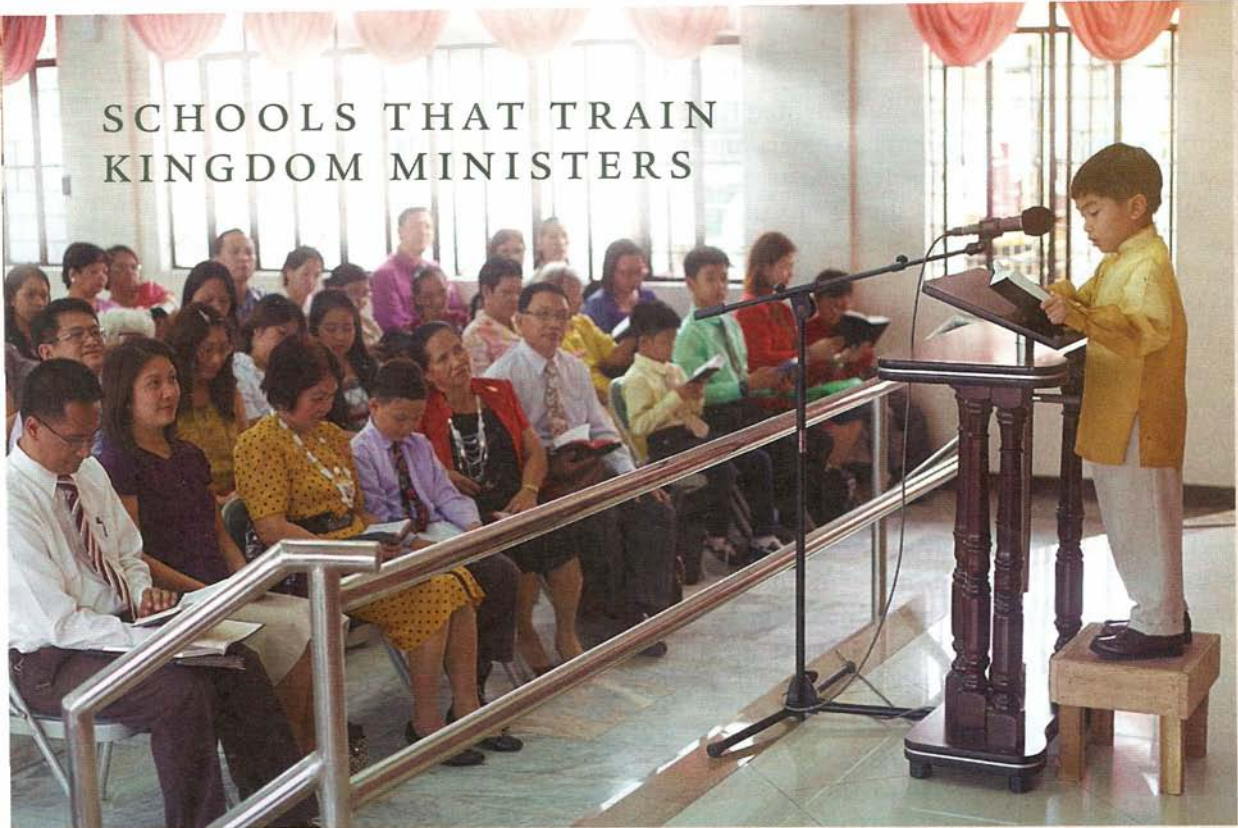
19. What other schools does the Teaching Committee supervise, and what are those schools designed to do?

20. Why could Jesus say that all of us are “taught by Jehovah,” and what are you determined to do?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What training did Jesus receive from his Father?
- How has the King trained his followers to be evangelizers?
- How have qualified brothers been trained to fulfill their responsibilities?
- How can you show that you appreciate the training that the King has provided?

SCHOOLS THAT TRAIN KINGDOM MINISTERS



THEOCRATIC MINISTRY SCHOOL

Purpose: To train publishers to be effective preachers and teachers of the good news.

Duration: Continuous.

Location: Local Kingdom Hall.

Enrollment: All may be enrolled who are actively associating with the congregation, who agree with the teachings of the Bible, and whose lives are in harmony with Christian principles. To join, speak to the Theocratic Ministry School overseer.

Benefits: Sharon, who is enrolled in the school despite being paralyzed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), says: *"The Theocratic Ministry School has taught me to research and present information logically. I have also learned to listen to others and focus on their spiritual needs, not just my own."*

Arnie, a longtime traveling overseer, comments: *"I grew up a stutterer and had trouble making eye contact with others. This school has helped me to gain confidence. With Jehovah's help, through this training I have learned breathing and concentration techniques. I am very grateful for the ability to praise God in the congregation and in my ministry."*

SCHOOL FOR CONGREGATION ELDERS ^[1]

Purpose: To help elders deepen their spirituality and care for their responsibilities in the congregation.

Duration: Five days.

Location: Decided by the branch office; usually a nearby Kingdom Hall or an Assembly Hall.

FOOTNOTE

[1] This school is not yet operating in every country.

Enrollment: The branch office invites elders.

Benefits: Note some comments from brothers in the 92nd class of this school at Patterson, New York, U.S.A.:

"The school has benefited me greatly, helping me to look at myself and see how I can take care of Jehovah's sheep."

"I will carry this training with me for the rest of my life."

PIONEER SERVICE SCHOOL

Purpose: To help pioneers "fully accomplish" their ministry.—2 Tim. 4:5.

Duration: Six days.

Location: Decided by the branch office; usually a nearby Kingdom Hall.

Enrollment: Those who have been a regular pioneer for at least one year are enrolled automatically and notified of the school by their circuit overseer. Some longtime pioneers who have not attended in the past five years may be invited to attend again.

Benefits: *"The school has helped me to deal with challenges in the ministry and in my life," says Lily. "The way I study, the way I teach, and the way I use the Bible have improved greatly. I am better prepared to help others, support the elders, and contribute to the growth of the congregation."*

Brenda, who has attended the school twice, notes: *"The school allowed me to be more absorbed in spiritual things, strengthen my conscience, and focus on helping others. Clearly, Jehovah is generous!"*

BETHEL ENTRANTS' SCHOOL

Purpose: This school is designed to help new arrivals to make a success of their Bethel service.

Duration: Sixteen weeks for 45 minutes each week.

Location: Bethel.

Enrollment: Permanent members of the Bethel family and long-term temporary volunteers (a year or longer) are enrolled automatically.

Benefits: Demetrius, who attended this school in the 1980's, says: *"This course improved my study habits and helped prepare me for a long Bethel career. The instructors, curriculum, and practical counsel convinced me of Jehovah's loving concern and of his desire for me to succeed in my Bethel service."*

SCHOOL FOR KINGDOM EVANGELIZERS^[1]

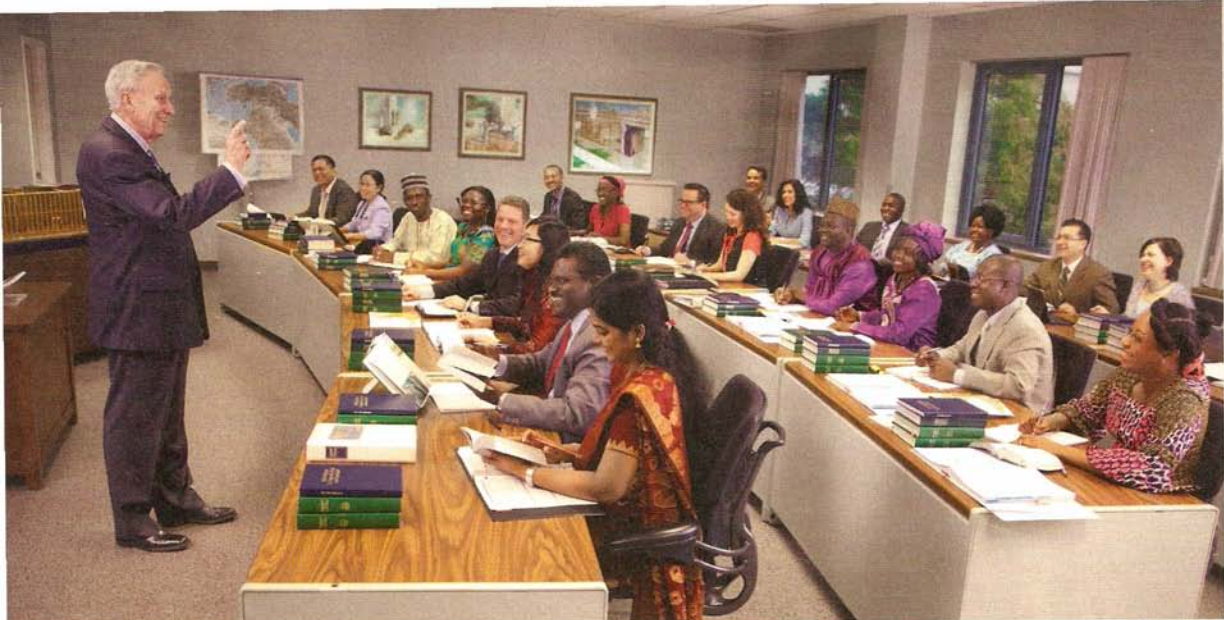
Purpose: To give regular and special pioneers (married couples, single brothers, and single sisters) specialized training so that they can be used more fully by Jehovah and his organization. Many graduates will be assigned to serve where there is a greater need in their home country. Graduates under 50 might serve as temporary special pioneers to open up and expand the work in isolated areas.

Duration: Two months.

Location: Decided by the branch office; usually at a Kingdom Hall or an Assembly Hall.

Enrollment: Regular and special pioneers between 23 and 65 years of age who are in good health, who have the circumstances to serve wherever there is a greater need, and who have the attitude "Here I am! Send me!" may be enrolled. (Isa. 6:8) All who attend the school, single brothers and sisters as well as married couples, must have been in the full-time service for at least two years without interruption. Couples must have been married for at least two years. Brothers must have served as either an elder or a ministerial servant for at least two consecutive years. If this school is available in your branch territory, a meeting will be held at the district convention to provide information for those interested in enrolling.

Benefits: Many positive comments have been received from those who have attended the Bible School for Single Brothers and the Bible School for Christian Couples. In 2013, the Governing Body approved combining those two schools into one called the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. Now the benefits of the



Gilead class—Patterson, New York

course will be experienced by many more faithful pioneers, including single sisters.

WATCHTOWER BIBLE SCHOOL OF GILEAD

Purpose: Graduates may be assigned as traveling overseers, as field missionaries, or as Bethelites. By putting their training to good use, graduates help to strengthen and stabilize the field and branch organization.

Duration: Five months.

Location: Watchtower Educational Center, Patterson, New York.

Enrollment: Married couples, single brothers, and single sisters, who are already serving in some form of special full-time service. Field missionaries who were not previously graduates of Gilead, as well as special pioneers, Bethelites, or traveling overseers and their wives, may be invited by their Branch Committee to apply. Applicants must speak and write English.

Benefits: Lade and Monique, a married couple from the United States who have been in their

assignment for several years, offer the following comments:

“Gilead school prepared us to go anywhere in the world, roll up our sleeves, and work with our dear brothers,” says Lade.

Monique adds: *“As I apply what I’ve learned from God’s Word, I find great joy in my assignment. I see that joy as proof of Jehovah’s love.”*

KINGDOM MINISTRY SCHOOL

Purpose: To train traveling overseers, elders, and ministerial servants to care for their oversight and organizational responsibilities. (Acts 20:28) Current situations, trends, and immediate needs of the congregations are covered. This school is held every few years, as decided by the Governing Body.

Duration: In recent years this school has been conducted for varying lengths of time.

Location: Usually a nearby Kingdom Hall or an Assembly Hall.

Enrollment: The circuit overseer notifies elders and ministerial servants. The branch office invites traveling overseers.

Benefits: *"The school, though compact and precise, invigorates elders to maintain joy and carry on in a manly way in Jehovah's service. Both new and longtime elders learn to shepherd effectively and be united in the same line of thought."*—Quinn.

"This training was balanced—building our spiritual appreciation, warning us of dangers, and providing us with practical suggestions to care for the flock."
—Michael.

SCHOOL FOR TRAVELING OVERSEERS AND THEIR WIVES⁽¹⁾

Purpose: To help circuit and district overseers serve congregations more effectively, "work hard in speaking and teaching," and shepherd those in their charge.—1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

Duration: Two months.

Location: Determined by the branch office.

Enrollment: The branch office invites circuit and district overseers and their wives.

Benefits: *"Our appreciation for Jesus' headship over the organization was enhanced. We saw the need to encourage the brothers we serve and to fortify the unity of each congregation. The course further impressed on our minds that while the traveling overseer offers advice and even correction on occasion, his main goal is to help the brothers to see that Jehovah loves them."*—Joel and Connie, first class, 1999.

SCHOOL FOR BRANCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND THEIR WIVES

Purpose: To help Branch Committee members care better for the work of supervising Bethel homes, give attention to service matters affecting congregations, and oversee circuits and districts in their respective territories.—Luke 12:48b.

Duration: Two months.

Location: Watchtower Educational Center, Patterson, New York.

Enrollment: The Service Committee of the Governing Body invites members of Branch or Country Committees and their wives.

Benefits: Lowell and Cara were part of the 25th class. They now serve in Nigeria.

"I was reminded that no matter how busy I am or what work I have been given, the key to pleasing Jehovah is spirituality," says Lowell.

Cara recalls a lesson she took away from the school: *"If I cannot state a point simply, I need to study the subject better before trying to teach it to others."*

Brothers and sisters benefit from theocratic training



Left:
Relief supplies sent
from Switzerland to
our brothers in
Germany, 1946

Right:
Rebuilding a
Kingdom Hall
in Japan after a
tsunami, 2011



SECTION 6

KINGDOM SUPPORT

Building for Worship
and Providing Relief



YOU walk into your Kingdom Hall and hardly recognize the place. You have always been proud of this building. You may even have happy memories of helping in its construction some years ago. But in a way you are even prouder now, for the Kingdom Hall has been transformed temporarily into a relief center. After a recent storm brought floods and devastation to your region, the Branch Committee quickly organized a way for the victims of the disaster to get food, clothing, clean water, and other help. Donated relief supplies are

neatly arranged. Brothers and sisters are filing in, getting what they need and, in many cases, wiping tears of joy from their eyes.

Jesus said that the outstanding mark of his people would be their love for one another. (John 13:34, 35) In this section, we will consider how Christian love is being shown in the building projects and the relief efforts undertaken by Jehovah's Witnesses. All such love is powerful evidence that we live under Jesus' Kingdom rule.

18

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Why and how
Jehovah's people
support Kingdom
work financially

1, 2. (a) How did Brother Russell answer a minister who wanted to know how the activities of the Bible Students were managed? (b) What will we consider in this chapter?

3, 4. (a) What confidence does Jehovah have in his worshippers? (b) How did the Israelites show their support for the building of the tabernacle?

How Kingdom Activities Are Financed

ON ONE occasion, Brother Charles T. Russell was approached by a minister of the Reformed Church who wanted to know how the activities of the Bible Students were managed.

"We never take up a collection," explained Brother Russell.

"How do you get the money?" asked the minister.

"If I tell you what is the simplest truth you will hardly be able to believe it," replied Russell. "When people get interested in this way, they find no basket placed under their nose. But they see there are expenses. They say to themselves, 'This hall costs something . . . How can I get a little money into this thing?'"

The minister looked at Brother Russell in disbelief.

"I am telling you the plain truth," continued Russell. "They do ask me this very question, 'How can I get a little money into this cause?' When one gets a blessing and has any means, he wants to use it for the Lord. If he has no means, why should we prod him for it?"^[1]

² Brother Russell was indeed telling "the plain truth." God's people have a long history of making voluntary contributions to support true worship. In this chapter, we will examine some Scriptural examples of this along with our modern-day history. As we consider how Kingdom activities are being financed today, each of us would do well to ask, 'How can I show my support for the Kingdom?'

"Let Everyone With a Willing Heart Bring a Contribution"

³ Jehovah has confidence in his true worshippers. He knows that if they are given the opportunity, they will gladly show their devotion by their voluntary giving. Consider two examples from Israel's history.

FOOTNOTE

[1] *The Watch Tower*, July 15, 1915, pages 218-219.

4 After leading the Israelites out of Egypt, Jehovah told them to build a portable tent, or tabernacle, for worship. The structure and its furnishings would require considerable resources. Jehovah instructed Moses to give the people the opportunity to support the project, saying: "Let everyone with a willing heart bring a contribution for Jehovah." (Ex. 35:5) How did the people, who not long before had toiled "in harsh conditions in every form of slavery," respond? (Ex. 1:14) They showed unqualified support, willingly parting with gold, silver, and other valuables—most of which they had likely obtained from their former masters, the Egyptians. (Ex. 12:35, 36) The Israelites gave more than was needed and had to be "restrained from bringing in anything else."—Ex. 36:4-7.

5 Some 475 years later, David contributed out of his "private treasure" to finance the building of the temple, the first permanent center of true worship on earth. Then he gave his fellow Israelites the opportunity to give, asking: "Who volunteers to come forward today with a gift in hand for Jehovah?" In response, the people made "voluntary offerings to Jehovah with a complete heart." (1 Chron. 29:3-9) Recognizing the true source of the contributions, David said in prayer to Jehovah: "Everything is from you, and we have given to you what comes from your own hand."—1 Chron. 29:14.

6 Neither Moses nor David had to pressure God's people to give. Rather, the people gave with willing hearts. What about today? We are well-aware that the work God's Kingdom is doing requires money. It takes considerable resources to publish and distribute Bibles and Bible literature, to build and maintain meeting places and branch facilities, and to provide emergency relief aid to fellow believers in times of disaster. Therefore, important questions arise: How are the necessary funds obtained? Do the King's followers need to be prodded to give?

"It Will Never Beg nor Petition Men for Support"

7 Brother Russell and his associates refused to imitate the money-raising schemes so common in the churches of Christendom. In the second issue of the *Watch Tower*, under the heading "Do You Want 'Zion's Watch Tower'?" Russell stated: "'Zion's Watch Tower' has, we believe, JEHOVAH for its backer, and while this is the case it will never *beg* nor *petition* men for support. When He who says: 'All

5. How did the Israelites respond when David gave them the opportunity to contribute to the building of the temple?

6. Why is money needed to carry out Kingdom work today, and what questions arise?

7, 8. Why do Jehovah's people not beg or petition others for money?

9, 10. What is one reason why we make voluntary contributions?

11. What moves us to give Jehovah our best possible gift?

the gold and silver of the mountains are mine,' fails to provide necessary funds, we will understand it to be time to suspend the publication." (Hag. 2:7-9) Over 130 years later, *The Watchtower* and the organization that publishes it are still going strong!

⁸ Jehovah's people do not beg for money. They do not pass collection plates or send out letters of solicitation. Neither do they use bingo, bazaars, or raffles to raise money. They hold to what the *Watch Tower* long ago said: "We have never considered it proper to solicit money for the Lord's cause, after the common custom . . . It is our judgment that money raised by the various begging devices in the name of our Lord is offensive, unacceptable to him, and does not bring his blessing either upon the givers or the work accomplished."^[2]

"Let Each One Do Just as He Has Resolved in His Heart"

⁹ As Kingdom subjects today, we do not need to be coerced into giving. Quite the contrary, we gladly use our money and other resources to support Kingdom activities. Why are we so willing to give? Consider three reasons.

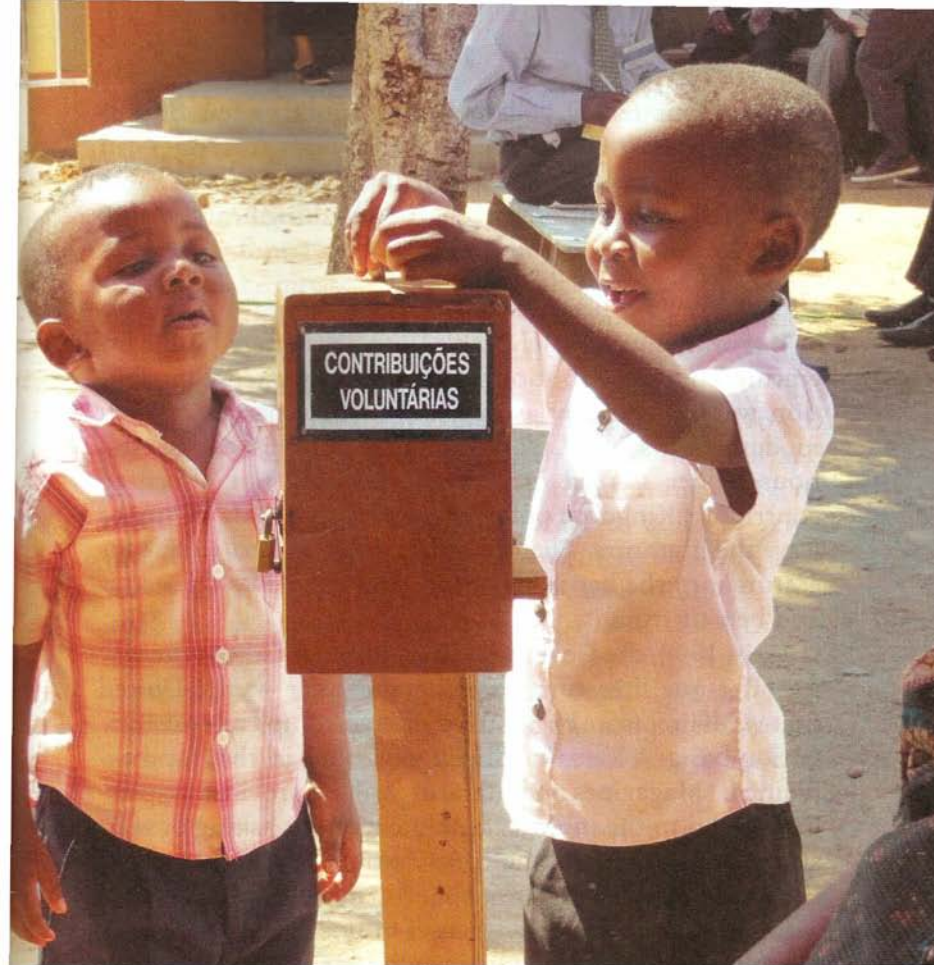
¹⁰ First, we make voluntary contributions because we love Jehovah and want to do "what is pleasing in his eyes." (1 John 3:22) Jehovah is indeed pleased with a worshipper who gives freely from his heart. Let us examine the apostle Paul's words about Christian giving. (**Read 2 Corinthians 9:7.**) A true Christian is not a reluctant or forced giver. Rather, he gives because he has "resolved in his heart" to do so.^[3] That is, he gives after he has considered a need and how he can fill it. Such a giver is dear to Jehovah, for "God loves a cheerful giver." Another translation reads: "God loves people who love to give."

¹¹ Second, we make material contributions as a way of thanking Jehovah for our many blessings. Consider a heart-searching principle in the Mosaic Law. (**Read Deuteronomy 16:16, 17.**) When attending the three annual festivals, each Israelite man was to give a gift "in proportion to the blessing that Jehovah" had given him. Hence, before attending a festival, each man had to count his blessings and search his heart, deciding on the best possible gift he could bring. In a similar way, when we contemplate the many ways that Jehovah has blessed us, we feel moved to give him our best possible gift. Our wholehearted gift, which includes our material contributions, is a reflection of how

FOOTNOTES

[2] *The Watch Tower*, August 1, 1899, page 201.

[3] One scholar says that the Greek term rendered "resolved" "has the idea of predetermination." He adds: "Though there is spontaneous joy in giving, it is still to be planned and systematic."—1 Cor. 16:2.



Our young ones in Mozambique also love to give

much we appreciate the blessings Jehovah has showered upon us.—2 Cor. 8:12-15.

¹² Third, by our voluntary contributions, we show our love for the King Jesus Christ. How so? Note what Jesus told his disciples on the final night of his earthly life. (**Read John 14:23.**) “If anyone loves me,” Jesus said, “he will observe my word.” Jesus’ “word” includes his command to preach the Kingdom good news in all the earth. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) We observe that “word” by doing all within our power—expending our time, energy, and material resources—to promote the Kingdom-preaching work. We thereby show our love for the Messianic King.

¹³ Yes, as loyal Kingdom subjects, we want with all our heart to show our support for the Kingdom by making financial contributions. How do we do so? That is a personal decision. Each one gives to the best of his ability.

12, 13. How do our voluntary contributions show our love for the King, and how much does each one give?

14. For many years, Jehovah's Witnesses offered their literature on what basis?

15, 16. (a) What adjustment in the way we offer our literature was started by the Governing Body in 1990? (b) How are voluntary donations made? (See also the box "Where Do Our Donations Go?")

17-19. Explain how donated funds are used for (a) the worldwide work, (b) Kingdom Hall construction worldwide, and (c) local congregation expenses.

Many of our fellow believers, however, have few of this world's goods. (Matt. 19:23, 24; Jas. 2:5) But such ones can take comfort in knowing that Jehovah and his Son value even small contributions made from a willing heart.—Mark 12:41-44.

How Is Money Received?

14 For many years, Jehovah's Witnesses offered Bible literature on a contribution basis. The suggested contribution was kept as low as possible so that people of even modest means could receive the literature. Of course, if a householder seemed interested but could not afford to contribute, Kingdom publishers were more than willing to leave the literature. Their heartfelt desire was to get the literature into the hands of sincere people who could read it and benefit from it.

15 In 1990, the Governing Body began to adjust the way we offer our literature. Starting that year in the United States, all literature began to be offered completely on a donation basis. A letter to all congregations in that land explained: "Magazines and literature will be provided to publishers and to the interested public without asking or even suggesting that a specific contribution be made as a precondition to receiving an item. . . . Any who wish to make a donation to defray the expenses of our educational work may do so, but they may receive the literature whether or not a donation is made." That arrangement served to clarify the voluntary and religious nature of our work and to make clear that "we are not peddlers of the word of God." (2 Cor. 2:17) In time, the voluntary donation arrangement was implemented in branches around the world.

16 How are voluntary donations made? In Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses, there are discreetly-placed contribution boxes. Individuals may use them or send donations directly to one of the legal entities used by Jehovah's Witnesses. Each year an article in *The Watchtower* outlines how such willing donations can be made.

How Is the Money Used?

17 **Worldwide work.** Funds are used to cover the expenses incurred in carrying out the worldwide preaching work. These expenses include the cost of producing literature for global distribution, constructing and maintaining branch offices and Bethel homes, and operating various theocrat-

ic schools. In addition, funds are used to care for missionaries, traveling overseers, and special pioneers. Our donations are also used to provide emergency relief aid to fellow believers in times of disaster.^[4]

18 Kingdom Hall construction worldwide. Funds are used to make interest-free loans available to congregations needing to build or remodel a Kingdom Hall. As these loans are repaid, still more loans can be made to assist other congregations.^[5]

19 Local congregation expenses. Funds are used to pay for the operation and upkeep of the Kingdom Hall and to return any money that the congregation may have received from the branch office in order to build or renovate its meeting place. The elders might recommend that some funds be sent to the local branch office for use in furthering the worldwide work. In such cases, the elders would present a resolution to the congregation. If approved, the recommended funds would be sent. Each month, the brother who cares for the congregation's accounts prepares a financial report, which is read to the congregation.

20 When we consider all that is involved in carrying out the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work earth wide, we are moved to "honor Jehovah with [our] valuable things." (Prov. 3:9, 10) Our valuable things include our physical, mental, and spiritual assets. We certainly want to use these to the full in Kingdom work. Remember, though, that our valuable things also include our material assets. Let us be resolved to give what we can, when we can. Our voluntary donations bring honor to Jehovah and show our support for the Messianic Kingdom.

20. How can you honor Jehovah with your "valuable things"?

FOOTNOTES

[4] See Chapter 20 for more information about the ministry of relief.

[5] See Chapter 19 for details about Kingdom Hall construction.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What can you learn from the example of those who contributed for the construction of the tabernacle and of the temple?
- Why do Kingdom subjects today gladly use their money and other resources to support Kingdom activities?
- How can you show your support for all that the Kingdom is accomplishing today?

WHERE DO OUR DONATIONS GO?

ALL DONATIONS ARE
USED EXCLUSIVELY TO SUPPORT
KINGDOM INTERESTS



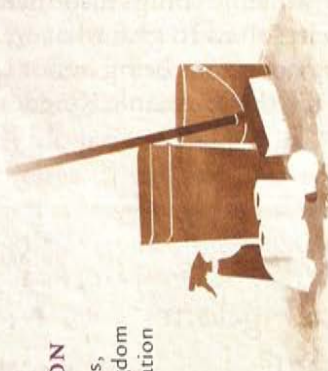
1 PUBLISHING

Publishing and distributing literature,
printed and electronic



2 LOCAL CONGREGATION

Operating expenses,
upkeep of the Kingdom
Hall, and congregation
resolutions^[6]



3

KINGDOM HALL CONSTRUCTION

Between 1999 and 2013, over 24,500
Kingdom Halls were built in lands
with limited resources



4

DISASTER RELIEF

(See the chart on pages 214-215)

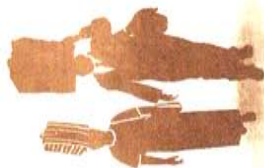


FOOTNOTE

[6] Wherever they gather for worship, Jehovah's Witnesses have arrangements in place for making contributions, but the specifics may vary somewhat from one land to another.

5 SPECIAL FULL-TIME SERVANTS

Includes basic living expenses such as housing, food, and health care



Traveling Overseers



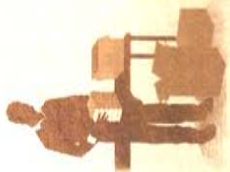
Special Pioneers



Missionaries



International and Kingdom Hall Construction Personnel



Bethelites

6 BRANCHES AND TRANSLATION OFFICES



7 CONVENTIONS



8 THEOCRATIC SCHOOLS



WAYS TO DONATE



CONTRIBUTION BOXES



DIRECT DONATIONS
(made by cash, check, or electronically, such as through jw.org)



ESTATES/NONCASH DONATIONS



TRUSTS AND ANNUITIES

19

Building Work That Honors Jehovah

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Worldwide construction work serves Kingdom interests

1, 2. (a) What have Jehovah's servants long enjoyed doing? (b) What does Jehovah treasure?

3. What will we review in this chapter?

4. (a) Why do we need more places of worship? (b) Why have various branch offices been consolidated? (See the box "Branch Construction —Adjusting to Changing Needs.")

JEHOVAH'S loyal servants have long enjoyed constructing buildings that bring praise to his name. The Israelites, for example, enthusiastically participated in the building of the tabernacle and generously provided materials for it. —Ex. 35:30-35; 36:1, 4-7.

² Jehovah does not view the building materials themselves as the primary things that bring him honor, nor are they the things that he values most. (Matt. 23:16, 17) What Jehovah treasures, the gift that brings him honor above all else, is the worship rendered him by his servants, including their willing spirit and zealous work. (Ex. 35:21; Mark 12:41-44; 1 Tim. 6:17-19) That fact is significant. Why? Because buildings come and go. For instance, the tabernacle and the temple no longer exist. Those structures may be gone, but Jehovah has not forgotten the generosity and labor of his loyal servants who supported their construction. —**Read 1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 6:10.**

³ Jehovah's modern-day servants have also worked hard to construct places of worship. And what we have accomplished under the direction of our King Jesus Christ is truly remarkable! Clearly, Jehovah has blessed our efforts. (Ps. 127:1) In this chapter, we will review just some of the work that has been done and how it has brought honor to Jehovah. We will also hear from some who have been involved in accomplishing the work.

Building Kingdom Halls

⁴ As discussed in Chapter 16, Jehovah requires that we meet for worship. (Heb. 10:25) Our meetings not only strengthen our faith but also heighten our enthusiasm for the preaching work. As the last days progress, Jehovah continues to speed up that work. In response, hundreds of thousands flock to his organization each year. (Isa. 60:22)

With the greater number of Kingdom subjects comes a greater need for printing facilities to produce Bible-based literature. We also need more places of worship.

⁵ Early in the modern history of Jehovah's people, the Bible Students began to see the need for their own meeting places. It appears that one of the first places of worship constructed was in West Virginia, U.S.A., in 1890. By the 1930's, Jehovah's people had built or renovated a number of halls, but those meeting places had not yet been given a distinctive name. In 1935, though, Brother Rutherford visited Hawaii, where a hall was being constructed in conjunction with a new branch office. When asked what this building should be called, Brother Rutherford replied: "Don't you think we should call it 'Kingdom Hall,' since that is what we are doing, preaching the good news of the Kingdom?" (Matt. 24: 14) That appropriate name would soon be given not only

5. Why is the name Kingdom Hall appropriate? (See also the box "The New Light Church.")

THE NEW LIGHT CHURCH

IN THE late 1880's, many members of a Baptist congregation in the area of Mount Lookout, West Virginia, became Bible Students. For a while they continued to share the Baptist church with the Baptists. Apparently, whichever group got to the building first used it. By 1890, however, our brothers had

stopped meeting in the Baptist church and had constructed their own hall.

This hall appears to be one of the first places of worship built by Jehovah's modern-day people. It became known as the New Light church because the truths that the Bible Students taught were viewed as new light on the Scriptures.

The hall was used until the 1920's. Brother A. H. Macmillan and other traveling speakers known as pilgrims gave talks at the hall, and it was used to show the "Photo-Drama of Creation."

Bible Students shown in front of the New Light church



6, 7. What has the construction of quickly built Kingdom Halls provided?

to that particular hall but to most of the meeting places used by congregations of Jehovah's people worldwide.

⁶ By the 1970's, the need for Kingdom Halls was rapidly increasing. In response, brothers in the United States developed an efficient method of building attractive, functional structures in just a few days. By 1983, some 200 of such Kingdom Halls had been erected in the United States and Canada. To accomplish the work, brothers began forming regional building committees. This method worked so well that in 1986, the Governing Body formalized the arrangement, and by 1987, there were 60 Regional Building Committees (RBCs) in the United States.^[1] By 1992, RBCs had also been appointed in Argentina, Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and Spain. To be sure, the hardworking brothers who build Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls deserve our support, for the work they are doing is part of sacred service.

⁷ These quickly built Kingdom Halls provided a wonderful witness to the communities in which they were constructed. A newspaper in Spain, for example, carried the headline "Faith Moves Mountains." Commenting on the construction of such a Kingdom Hall in the town of Martos, the paper asked: "How is it possible that in this present world based on selfishness, volunteers from various regions [of Spain] unselfishly travel to Martos in order to

FOOTNOTE

[1] In 2013, more than 230,000 volunteers were approved to work with the 132 RBCs in the United States. In that country, annually those committees coordinated the construction of about 75 new Kingdom Halls and helped with the renovation or repair of about 900 halls.

BRANCH CONSTRUCTION —ADJUSTING TO CHANGING NEEDS

AS THE Kingdom-preaching work began to expand worldwide, branch offices were set up in one country after another. The first one was established in Britain in 1900; the second, in Germany in 1903; and the third, in Australia in 1904. The demand for literature also grew rapidly, requiring that printing facilities be constructed. One of the first was an eight-story structure in Brooklyn, New York, that was built in 1927. By 2013, Bibles, books, or magazines were being printed by 15 branches.

Construction of one of our first factory buildings in Brooklyn, 1927



erect a building that has broken all records for speed, perfection, and organization?” The article answered the question by quoting the words of one of the Witness volunteers: “The merit simply lies in the fact that we are a people taught by Jehovah.”

Building in Lands With Limited Resources

⁸ As the 20th century drew to a close, people streamed into Jehovah’s organization in lands where the brothers have limited resources. The local congregations did what they could to build meeting places. But in some countries, they had to endure ridicule and prejudice because the local Kingdom Halls were very primitive when compared with other places of worship. Starting in 1999, however, the Governing Body approved a program to accelerate the construction of Kingdom Halls in developing lands. Funds from more prosperous lands were made available so that an “equalizing” could take place. **(Read 2 Corinthians 8: 13-15.)** And brothers and sisters from other lands volunteered to help with the work.

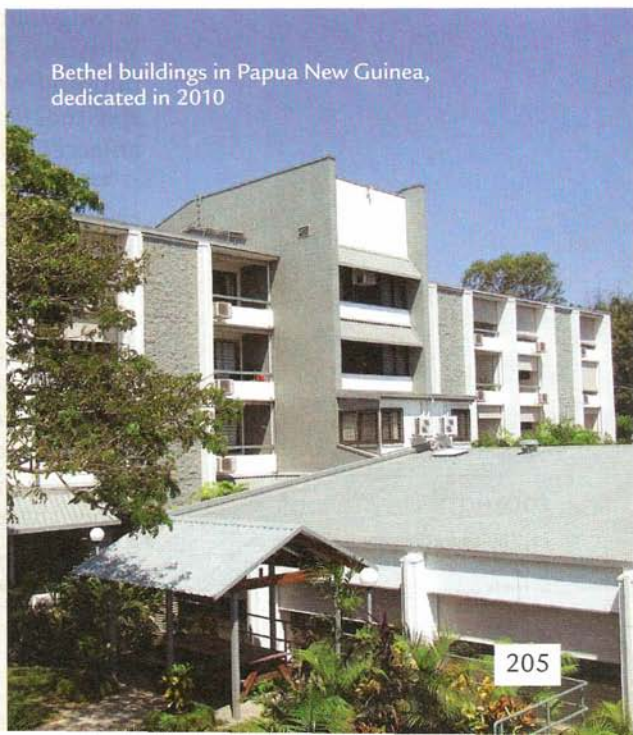
⁹ At first, the task seemed overwhelming. A report in 2001 revealed that more than 18,300 Kingdom Halls were needed in 88 developing countries. With the backing of God’s spirit and our King Jesus Christ, though, no task is impossible. (Matt. 19:26) Within about 15 years, from 1999

8. In 1999, what new program did the Governing Body approve, and why?

9. What task seemed overwhelming, but what was accomplished?

From the mid-1970’s to the early 1990’s, new branch facilities were built in some 60 lands. In a further 30 locations, branch offices were expanded. In recent years, however, a number of branch offices have been consolidated. Explaining some of the reasons, the *2013 Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses* said: “Improvements in communications and printing technology have reduced the number of personnel needed at larger branches. With fewer people serving at larger branches, room became available to house some who were working in smaller branches in other countries. Now, from key locations, a pool of experienced Witnesses [care] for the work of Bible education.”

Bethel buildings in Papua New Guinea, dedicated in 2010



10-12. How has the construction of Kingdom Halls brought honor to Jehovah's name?

13, 14. (a) What have you learned from the way one married couple reacted after observing activities at a Kingdom Hall construction site? (b) What can you do to ensure that your place of worship brings honor to Jehovah's name?

to 2013, God's people had built 26,849 Kingdom Halls as part of this program.^[2] Jehovah continues to bless the preaching work, so that as of 2013, there was still a need for some 6,500 Kingdom Halls in those countries, and currently, hundreds more are needed each year.

10 How has the construction of those new Kingdom Halls brought honor to Jehovah's name? A report from the branch office in Zimbabwe said: "Within one month of building a new Kingdom Hall, attendance at the meetings usually doubles." In many countries, it seems that people are reluctant to associate with us until a suitable place of worship is available. Once a Kingdom Hall is built, though, it soon fills up and another is required. However, it is more than just the appearance of the structures that draws people to Jehovah. The genuine Christian love displayed by those building the halls also affects the way people view his organization. Consider a few examples.

11 Indonesia. When a man who had been watching the construction of a Kingdom Hall found out that all the workers were volunteers, he said: "You people are simply amazing! I have seen how each one of you works wholeheartedly and with joy, even though you receive no payment. I think that there is no other religious organization like yours!"

12 Ukraine. A woman who had passed by a Kingdom Hall construction project each day concluded that the workers were Jehovah's Witnesses and that the building was to be a Kingdom Hall. She said: "I had heard about Jehovah's Witnesses from my sister who became one. Observing this building work, I decided that I also wanted to be in this spiritual family. Here I have seen love displayed." This woman accepted a Bible study and was baptized in 2010.

13 Argentina. A married couple approached the brother overseeing a Kingdom Hall construction site. The husband said, "We have been following your building activities very closely, and . . . we have decided that we want to learn about God in this place." He then asked, "What must we do to qualify to attend meetings here?" The couple accepted the offer of a Bible study, but on the condition that the whole family could take part. The brothers happily agreed to this condition.

14 You may not have had the privilege of helping to construct the Kingdom Hall in which you meet, but you can still do much to help your local place of worship bring honor to Jehovah's name. For example, you can enthusiastically

FOOTNOTE

[2] This figure does not include the numerous Kingdom Halls that were built in lands outside the program.



Building Kingdom Halls in lands with limited resources presents unique challenges

invite your Bible students, return visits, and other members of the public to attend meetings with you at the Kingdom Hall. You also have the opportunity to help clean and maintain your place of worship. With good planning, you may be able to donate toward the care of the Kingdom Hall you attend or donate toward the building of these places of worship in other parts of the world. **(Read 1 Corinthians 16:2.)** All these activities add to the praise of Jehovah's name.

Workers Who “Offer Themselves Willingly”

¹⁵ Much of the work that goes into building Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and branch facilities is done by local brothers and sisters. Often, though, they are assisted by brothers and sisters from other countries who have experience in construction. Some of those volunteers have organized their affairs so that they can work on an international project for a number of weeks. Others have made themselves available to serve for many years, moving from one construction assignment to the next.

¹⁶ International construction work presents unique challenges but also offers satisfying rewards. Timo and Lina, for instance, have traveled to countries in Asia, Europe, and South America to work on building Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and branch offices. Says Timo, “I have had a change of assignment on average every two years for the past 30 years.” Lina, who married Timo 25 years ago, says: “I’ve served with Timo in ten different countries. It takes a

15-17. (a) Who carry out much of the building work? (b) What have you learned from the comments made by the couples who have worked on international construction projects?

18. How is the prophecy recorded at Psalm 110:1-3 being fulfilled?



Timo and Lina Lappalainen
(See paragraph 16)

FOOTNOTE

[3] International servants and volunteers spend the majority of their time working on the building site, but they also support the local congregations in the preaching work on the weekend or in the evening.

considerable amount of energy and time to adapt to new food, a new climate, a new language, and a new preaching territory and to make new friends.”^[3] Has the effort been worthwhile? “The challenges,” says Lina, “have resulted in our greatest blessings. We have experienced Christian love and hospitality and have felt Jehovah’s loving care for us. We have also seen the fulfillment of the promise Jesus gave to his disciples, which is recorded at Mark 10:29, 30. We have received a hundred times more in terms of spiritual brothers, sisters, and mothers.” Timo says, “It brings us deep satisfaction to use our skills for the noblest of all purposes, participating in the expansion of the King’s belongings.”

¹⁷ Darren and Sarah, who have helped on construction projects in Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe, South America, and the South Pacific, feel that they have received more than they have given. Despite the challenges they have faced, Darren says: “It has been a privilege to work with brothers from various parts of the globe. I have seen that the love we share for Jehovah is like a thread that circles the globe, joining us all together.” Sarah says: “I have learned so much from brothers and sisters with different cultures! Seeing the sacrifices they make to serve Jehovah motivates me to continue giving my best.”

¹⁸ King David prophesied that even though subjects of God’s Kingdom would face challenges, they would “offer themselves willingly” to serve Kingdom interests. (**Read Psalm 110:1-3.**) All who are involved in work that supports the Kingdom are having a share in fulfilling those prophetic words. (1 Cor. 3:9) The scores of branch office buildings, hundreds of Assembly Halls, and tens of thousands of Kingdom Halls around the world provide tangible proof that God’s Kingdom is real and is now ruling. What a privilege we have to serve the King Jesus Christ in a work that brings Jehovah the honor he so richly deserves!

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- Why do we build meeting places and branch facilities?
- How does our building work bring honor to Jehovah?
- What can you do to support the building and maintenance of places of worship?

The Ministry of Relief

20

IT IS about 46 C.E., and Judea is in the grip of famine. The Jewish disciples of Christ living there lack the means to pay the sky-high prices demanded for the meager supply of grain available. They are hungry, staring starvation in the face. However, they are about to experience the protection of Jehovah's hand in a way that no other disciples of Christ have ever felt it before. What is about to happen?

² Moved by the suffering of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, Jewish and Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria, collect funds for their fellow believers. Then they select two responsible brothers in their midst, Barnabas and Saul, to deliver the relief aid to the congregation elders in Jerusalem. (**Read Acts 11:27-30; 12:25.**) Imagine how touched the needy brothers in Judea must have been by this act of love on the part of their brothers in Antioch!

³ That event, back in the first century C.E., is the first recorded instance of Christians living in one part of the world sending relief aid to Christians living in another part. Today, we follow the pattern set by our brothers in Antioch. When we learn that fellow believers in another area experience a disaster or a trial, we come to their aid.^[1] To appreciate how our relief efforts relate to our other ministerial activities, let us consider three questions about the ministry of relief: Why do we view relief work as a ministry? What are the objectives of our relief work? How do we benefit from the ministry of relief?

Why Relief Work Is “Sacred Service”

⁴ In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained that Christians have a twofold ministry. Although Paul's letter was directed to anointed Christians, today his words apply to Christ's “other sheep” as well. (John 10:16) One part of our ministry is “the ministry of the reconciliation,”

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Christian love in action during times of disaster

1, 2. (a) What hardship did Christians in Judea face? (b) What act of love did the Judean Christians experience?

3. (a) How do God's people in modern times still follow the pattern set by early Christians in Antioch? Give an example. (See also the box “Our First Large-Scale Relief Effort in Modern Times.”) (b) What questions will we consider in this chapter?

4. What did Paul tell the Corinthians about the Christian ministry?

FOOTNOTE

[1] This chapter considers relief efforts performed in behalf of fellow believers. However, in many instances, our relief work also benefits non-Witnesses. —Gal. 6:10.

5. Why is it significant that Paul called relief work a ministry?

6. (a) As Paul explained, why is relief work part of our worship? (b) Describe how our relief work is carried out globally today. (See the box “When Disaster Strikes!” page 214.)

7, 8. What is the first objective of our relief ministry? Explain.

that is, our preaching and teaching work. (2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Tim. 2:3-6) The other part involves a ministry that we perform in behalf of fellow believers. Specifically, Paul referred to a “relief ministry.” (2 Cor. 8:4) As to the expressions “*ministry* of the reconciliation” and “relief *ministry*,” in both instances the word “ministry” is a translation of a form of the Greek word *di-a-ko-ni’a*. Why is that significant?

5 By using the same Greek word for both activities, Paul grouped relief work with other forms of ministry that were carried out in the Christian congregation. He had stated earlier: “There are different ministries, and yet there is the *same* Lord; and there are different activities, . . . But [they] are performed by the very *same* spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:4-6, 11) In fact, Paul linked the various congregational ministries with “sacred service.”^[2] (Rom. 12:1, 6-8) No wonder he felt that it was appropriate to give part of his time “to minister to the holy ones!”—Rom. 15:25, 26.

6 Paul helped the Corinthians to see why relief work was part of their ministry and worship to Jehovah. Note his reasoning: Christians who provide relief do so because they are “submissive to the good news about the Christ.” (2 Cor. 9:13) Hence, moved by their desire to put Christ’s teachings into practice, Christians help fellow believers. The kind acts that they perform in behalf of their brothers, stated Paul, are nothing less than expressions of “the surpassing undeserved kindness of God.” (2 Cor. 9:14; 1 Pet. 4:10) Thus, in commenting on serving our brothers in need, which includes relief work, *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1975, rightly stated: “We should never doubt that Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ give real importance to this kind of service.” Yes, relief work is a valuable form of sacred service.—Rom. 12:1, 7; 2 Cor. 8:7; Heb. 13:16.

Relief Work With Clear Objectives

7 What are the objectives of our relief ministry? Paul addressed that question in his second letter to the Corinthians. (**Read 2 Corinthians 9:11-15.**) In these verses, Paul highlights three main objectives, or goals, that we attain by sharing in “the ministry of this public service,” that is, relief work. Let us consider them one at a time.

8 **First, our relief ministry brings glory to Jehovah.** Note how often in the five verses cited above Paul directs his brothers’ attention to Jehovah God. The apostle reminds them of “an expression of thanks to God” and of “many expressions of thanks to God.” (Verses 11, 12) He

FOOTNOTE

[2] Paul used the plural form of *di-a-ko-nos* (minister) to describe “ministerial servants.”—1 Tim. 3:12.

OUR FIRST LARGE-SCALE RELIEF EFFORT IN MODERN TIMES

IN September 1945, just a few months after World War II ended in Europe, Brother Knorr announced the start of a large-scale campaign to send “material aid to the needy brethren of central Europe.”

Within weeks after that announcement, Witnesses in Canada, the United States, and other lands began sorting and packing clothing and collecting food. From January 1946 onward, goods were sent to fellow believers in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, and Romania. This aid program was not a onetime effort. Relief shipments continued for two and a half

years! During that time some 85,000 brothers and sisters sent more than 700,000 pounds of food, over 1,000,000 pounds of clothing, and more than 124,000 pairs of shoes to their brothers and sisters in war-ravaged lands. By August 1948, this huge relief effort was concluded. “This has certainly been an expression of love one toward another,” noted *The Watchtower* in 1949. “We know all the brethren did this as an honor to the Lord, having in mind that this material assistance would help some to carry on their true worship; and so they esteemed it a great privilege to be able to serve their brethren in this manner.” This relief effort brought praise to Jehovah, provided relief to fellow believers, and strengthened the bond of unity among the brothers worldwide.



Switzerland, 1946

9. What change in thinking may relief work cause? Give an example.

10, 11. (a) What examples show that we are reaching the second objective of our relief work? (b) What publication helps relief workers? (See the box “An Added Tool for Relief Workers.”)

mentions how relief efforts cause Christians to “glorify God” and to praise “the surpassing undeserved kindness of God.” (Verses 13, 14) And Paul concludes his consideration about the relief ministry by declaring: “Thanks be to God.”—Verse 15; 1 Pet. 4:11.

⁹ Like Paul, God’s servants today view relief efforts as opportunities to bring glory to Jehovah and to adorn his teachings. (1 Cor. 10:31; Titus 2:10) In fact, relief work often plays a considerable part in removing negative notions that some people have about Jehovah and his Witnesses. To illustrate: A woman living in an area struck by a hurricane had a sign on her door that read: “Jehovah’s Witnesses—Do Not Call.” Then one day she saw relief workers restoring a damaged house across the street from her home. For days, she observed the friendly workers, and then she went over to find out who they were. On learning that the volunteers were Jehovah’s Witnesses, she was impressed and said, “I have misjudged you people.” The result? She took down the sign on her door.

¹⁰ Second, we “provide well for the needs” of fellow believers. (2 Cor. 9:12a) We are eager to meet the immediate needs and to help alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters. Why? Because the members of the Christian congregation form “one body,” and “if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it.” (1 Cor. 12:20, 26) Hence, brotherly affection and compassion move numerous brothers and sisters today to drop what they are doing at a moment’s notice, gather their tools, and head for disaster-stricken areas to bring relief to fellow believers. (Jas. 2:15, 16) For instance, after a tsunami struck Japan in 2011, the United States branch office sent a letter to Regional Building Committees in the United States, asking if “a few qualified brothers” would be available to help with rebuilding Kingdom Halls there. What was the response? Within weeks, nearly 600 volunteers applied to help—and agreed to fly to Japan at their own expense! “We have been overwhelmed with the response,” noted the United States branch office. When a brother in Japan asked a relief worker from abroad why he had come to help, he was told: “Our brothers in Japan are part of ‘our body.’ We feel their pain and suffering.” Moved by self-sacrificing love, relief workers have at times even risked their lives to help fellow believers.^[3]—1 John 3:16.

¹¹ Non-Witnesses also express appreciation for our relief work. For instance, after a disaster struck the state of Ar-

FOOTNOTE

[3] See the article “Aiding Our Family of Believers in Bosnia,” in the November 1, 1994, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 23-27.

kansas, U.S.A., in 2013, a newspaper reported on the rapid response of Witness volunteers, stating: “The organizational structure of the Jehovah’s Witnesses has developed the disaster response volunteer service to a fine art.” Indeed, as the apostle Paul noted, we “provide *well*” for our brothers in need.

12 Third, we help afflicted ones get back into their spiritual routine. Why is this important? Paul states that those receiving relief aid will be moved to make “many expressions of thanks to God.” (2 Cor. 9:12b) What better way could there be for afflicted ones to express their thanks to Jehovah than by getting back to their spiritual routine as quickly as possible? (Phil. 1:10) *The Watchtower* stated in 1945: “Paul approved . . . the collecting of the contributions because it was helping . . . needy Christian brethren to enjoy some material relief and to thus be able to engage more freely and energetically in Jehovah’s witness-work.” Our objective is the same today. By getting back in the preaching work, our brothers strengthen not only their distressed neighbors but also themselves.—**Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.**

13 Consider some comments from those who were recipients of much-needed relief aid, resumed sharing in the ministry, and were strengthened by doing so. “It was a blessing for our family to go in field service,” noted a brother. “It gave us a brief respite from anxiety over our own affairs as we tried to comfort others.” A sister said: “Focusing on spiritual activity took my mind off the destruction around me. It gave me a sense of security.” Another sister observed: “While many things were beyond our control, the ministry provided direction for my family. Talking with others about our hope of the new world strengthened our confidence that all things will be made new.”

14 Attending meetings is another spiritual activity that our afflicted fellow believers need to resume as quickly as possible. Consider what happened to Kiyoko, a sister then in her late 50’s. After she lost everything in a tsunami except the clothes and sandals she was wearing, she was at a loss as to how she would survive. Then an elder told her that they would have their regular Christian meeting in his car. Says Kiyoko: “An elder and his wife and another sister and I sat in the car. The meeting was simple but, like a miracle, the memory of the tsunami just slipped away from me. I felt peace of mind. That meeting showed me the power of Christian association.” Commenting on the meetings she

12-14. (a) Why is reaching the third objective of our relief work so important? (b) What expressions highlight the importance of continuing with spiritual activities?

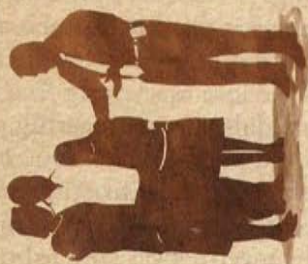
PREPARATION FOR A DISASTER

The Governing Body has directed that all branches worldwide give guidelines to congregation elders and traveling overseers as to how to prepare for and deal with disasters. For example, even before a disaster occurs, the elders need to make sure that they have up-to-date contact information for each congregation member.

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES!

1

Local elders contact
all publishers



2

Elders report to the coordinator
of the body of elders



3

Coordinators report to traveling
overseers and other responsible
brothers who are in contact with the
branch office

4

Food, water, shelter, medical care, and
emotional and spiritual support are provided
as soon as possible



5

Branch office sends a report about the situation and the needs to the Coordinators' Committee of the Governing Body



6

Coordinators' Committee assesses the needs and, if needed, approves that volunteers from other countries extend help

Disaster Relief Committee organizes relief efforts and helps the brothers and sisters with their long-term recovery



7

AN ADDED TOOL FOR RELIEF WORKERS

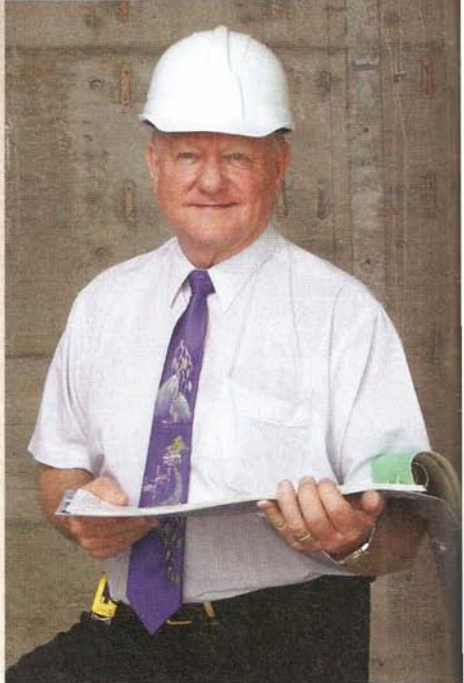
IN June 2013, the brochure *Jehovah's Witnesses and Disaster Relief* became available. It was especially prepared for government officials in the United States who oversee emergency management efforts. The brochure describes some of the relief efforts that we have carried out since the mid-1940's. It also features a map that illustrates the global scale of our relief work. "Brothers serving on

Disaster Relief Committees use this brochure to establish contacts with key officials in disaster-prone areas well before disasters strike," explains an elder who is involved in organizing relief efforts. "When such officials are already familiar with our relief activities, it becomes easier for us to obtain from them the permissions needed to enter areas where disasters have occurred."



IT SHAPED THE COURSE OF HIS LIFE

WHAT impact may taking part in relief work have on young ones? Consider what happened to **Peter Johnson**, who did so for the first time at age 18. He recalls: "Seeing the gratefulness of the brothers and feeling the joy that comes from giving touched me deeply. It reinforced my desire to use my life to serve Jehovah to the fullest extent." Thereafter, Peter started pioneering. He also worked at Bethel and later began serving as a member of a Regional Building Committee. "Doing relief work that first time back in 1974," says Peter today, "shaped the course of my life." Are you young? Could you follow Peter's example? Who knows how relief work may shape the course of *your* life in Jehovah's service!



15, 16. (a) What benefit would Christians in Corinth and elsewhere receive from supporting relief efforts? (b) How do we similarly benefit from relief work today?

attended after a disaster occurred, another sister stated: "They were my lifeline!"—Rom. 1:11, 12; 12:12.

The Ministry of Relief Brings Lasting Benefits

15 In his consideration of the ministry of relief, Paul also explained to the Corinthians the benefits that they and other Christians would receive from sharing in this work. He stated: "With *supplication for you*, they [the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who received the assistance] express *affection for you* because of the surpassing undeserved kindness of God upon you." (2 Cor. 9:14) Yes, the generosity of the Corinthians would move the Jewish Christians to pray in behalf of their brothers in Corinth, including Gentiles, and would deepen their affection for them.

16 Applying Paul's words about the benefits of relief work to our day, *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1945, stated: "When one section of God's consecrated people contributes to the needs of another group of them, think of the unifying effect it has!" That is exactly what relief workers today experience. "Doing relief work made me feel closer to my brothers than ever before," says an elder who helped in flood relief. One grateful sister who received relief aid put it this way, "Our brotherhood is the closest thing we have to Paradise on earth."—**Read Proverbs 17:17.**

17 When relief workers arrive at the scene of a disaster, our afflicted brothers experience in a special way the truth of God's promise: "I, Jehovah your God, am grasping your right hand, the One saying to you, 'Do not be afraid. I will help you.'" (Isa. 41:13) After surviving a disaster, a sister said: "I felt hopeless seeing the damage, but Jehovah extended his hand. The help I received from the brothers is indescribable." After a disaster devastated their area, two elders wrote in behalf of the congregations where they serve: "The earthquake caused great pain, but we experienced the help that Jehovah provides through our brothers. We had read about relief work, but now we saw it carried out in front of our eyes."

Can You Have a Part?

18 Would you like to taste the joy that relief work provides? If so, keep in mind that relief workers are often selected from those who work on Kingdom Hall construction projects. So mention to your elders that you would like to fill out an application form. An elder with much experience in relief work gives this reminder: "Travel to a disaster area only after you have received an official invitation from a Disaster Relief Committee to do so." In that way, our relief work will proceed in an orderly manner.

19 Relief work is indeed an outstanding way in which we obey Christ's command to "love one another." By showing such love, we demonstrate that we are truly Christ's disciples. (John 13:34, 35) What a blessing it is for us today to have so many willing workers who bring glory to Jehovah as they provide needed relief to those who loyally support God's Kingdom!

17. (a) How do the words found at Isaiah 41:13 apply to relief work? (b) Mention some examples of how relief work honors Jehovah and strengthens our bond of union. (See also the box "Volunteers Around the World Bring Relief.")

18. What can you do if you want to share in relief work? (See also the box "It Shaped the Course of His Life.")

19. How do relief workers help greatly in demonstrating that we are truly Christ's disciples?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How do we know that relief work is part of our sacred service to Jehovah?
- What are three main objectives of our relief efforts?
- Relief work brings what lasting benefits?
- How does relief work relate to Jesus' command found at John 13:34?

VOLUNTEERS AROUND THE WORLD BRING RELIEF

CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA

In 1994, some 800,000 or more people in Rwanda were killed in tribal genocide. In the aftermath of that massacre, unrest spread to other lands in Central Africa, resulting in overcrowded refugee camps. To help their afflicted fellow believers, Jehovah's Witnesses in Belgium, France, and Switzerland airlifted some 300 tons of clothing, medicine, tents, food, and other supplies. Within weeks, those supplies reached our needy brothers.

Also in Africa, a team of ten Witness doctors and nurses from France have been providing relief to our brothers to alleviate their suffering caused by civil war, famine, and disease. In the past two

years alone, the team handled over 10,000 medical consultations. Their work brings praise to Jehovah and his organization. "When we arrive in an area to help our brothers and sisters," relates one of the nurses, "people say with respect: 'These are Jehovah's Witnesses. They have come to help their brothers.'" After receiving help from a nurse, one Witness exclaimed: "Thank you, my sister. Thank you, Jehovah!"

At times, relief work may also be needed when severe accidents occur. In 2012, a road accident in Nigeria killed 13 Witnesses, all belonging to one small congregation, and left 54 others seriously injured. A relief committee organized around-the-clock personal care for each victim. When a hospital patient ob-

served the outpouring of support that the injured brothers and sisters received, she telephoned her pastor, saying: "No one from our church has visited me. Come to the hospital and see love in action among Jehovah's Witnesses!"

Though our dear brothers in that small congregation suffered a painful loss, they felt comforted by the expressions of love they received from their fellow believers. Furthermore, after observing the loving care that the relief workers showered on the afflicted brothers, several individuals in that congregation were moved to intensify their ministry. Before the accident, the congregation had 35 publishers. Within a year, that number had grown to 60.

AUSTRALIA

In 2013, parts of Queensland's coast were hit by a flood that left 70 Witnesses homeless. Mark and Rhonda and their daughter fled their flooded home and ended up in an evacuation center. The place was packed. "It was basically standing room only," relates Rhonda. The deafening noise from the helicopters that were landing and departing close-by added to the tense atmosphere in the center. Worried, she asked her husband, "What are we going to do?" Mark fervently prayed to Jehovah, asking for help. "About 30 minutes later," says Rhon-

da, "a car arrived at the center, and three brothers got out. When we met, they said: 'We're taking you with us. You will stay at a brother's house.'" Adds Rhonda: "It's hard to describe the overwhelming emotion we felt at that moment for the loving care of Jehovah's organization."

Over 250 volunteers rushed to that same disaster area to help their brothers. Says an elderly brother: "A group of Witnesses came out of nowhere and toiled like ants to clear up the mess in my home. My wife and I will never forget how they came to our aid."

BRAZIL

In 2008, mudslides and floods in the state of Santa Catarina forced some 80,000 people out of their homes. It was like a “tsunami of clay, mud and trees,” said a resident. Some brothers found shelter in an Assembly Hall. “They escaped with only the clothes they were wearing, all soaked with mud,” relates Márcio, the hall’s caretaker. Says one sister: “Our house collapsed. It was painful to see it disappear in seconds, but I will never forget how our brothers and sisters comforted us. We received so many expressions of love! The experience taught me how wise it is to treasure spiritual things.”

Mudslides have devastated entire neighborhoods on the mountain slopes near the city of Rio de Janeiro. To respond effectively to such recurring disasters, the brothers formed a per-

manent Disaster Relief Committee. When there is a threat of imminent mudslides, monitors (assigned brothers living in the affected area) alert the committee. Quickly, volunteers arrive in trucks marked with the sign “Jehovah’s Witnesses—Humanitarian Aid.” All members of the well-equipped rescue crews have pre-assigned tasks. The workers wear vests that clearly identify them as Jehovah’s Witnesses. Together with brothers of the Hospital Liaison Committees, they provide aid to injured brothers and sisters. Relief workers bring in food, water, medical supplies, clothing, and cleaning products. Cleaning mud from houses is a huge task. After one recent mudslide, it took 60 volunteers to remove four truckloads of mud from just one home!

An Assembly Hall in Santa Catarina, Brazil, is turned into a relief center filled with donated supplies, 2009



Do you yearn to
see Kingdom
promises
come true?



SECTION 7

KINGDOM PROMISES

Making All Things New



YOU pluck a luscious apple from the branch. You take in its aroma before adding it to the growing mound in the basket. You have been working for hours, but you feel fine and ready for a bit more work. Your mother is at a tree nearby, happily working and chatting with other family members and friends who are helping with the harvest. She looks so young—the way you remember her when you were just a child all those years ago. It is hard to believe that you saw her grow old in the world that is now long gone. You saw her waste away with illness, you held her hand as she breathed her last, and you wept at her graveside. Yet,

here she is, along with so many others, alive and healthy again!

Such days will come; we know it. We know it because God's promises always come true. In this section, we will consider how some Kingdom promises will be fulfilled in the near future, leading up to the war of Armageddon. We will also review some of the thrilling Kingdom promises that will be fulfilled thereafter. How delighted we will be to see the time when God's Kingdom rules over this whole earth, making all things new!

21

God's Kingdom Removes Its Enemies

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

The events leading up to the war of Armageddon

- 1, 2. (a) What evidence shows that our King has been ruling since 1914?
- (b) What will we consider in this chapter?
3. What is the first development that we are awaiting?

IT HAS been faith-strengthening to review what God's Kingdom has accomplished in the midst of its enemies. (Ps. 110:2) Our King has raised up an army of willing preachers. He has cleansed and refined his followers spiritually and morally. And despite all efforts of enemies of the Kingdom to divide us, we enjoy worldwide unity today. These and the many other Kingdom accomplishments we have considered provide overwhelming evidence that since 1914, our King has been ruling in the midst of enemies of the Kingdom.

² The Kingdom will do even more amazing things in the near future. It will "come" to "crush and put an end" to its enemies. (Matt. 6:10; Dan. 2:44) But before that time arrives, other significant events will take place. What are they? Several Bible prophecies address that question. Let us examine some of those prophecies to see what events still lie ahead of us.

Precursor of "Sudden Destruction"

³ **Proclaiming peace.** In writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul described the first development that we are awaiting. (**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.**) In this letter Paul mentions "Jehovah's day," which will begin with the attack on "Babylon the Great." (Rev. 17:5) However, just before Jehovah's day begins, nations will be saying, "Peace and security!" This expression may refer to one pronouncement or to a series of notable statements. Will religious leaders be involved? Since they are part of the world, they will possibly join the nations in saying, "There is peace!" (Jer. 6:14; 23:16, 17; Rev. 17:1, 2) This proclaiming of peace and security will signal that the day of Jehovah is about to begin. Enemies of God's Kingdom "will by no means escape."

4 How do we benefit from understanding the significance of this prophecy? Paul states: “You are not in darkness, so that the day should overtake you as it would thieves.” (1 Thess. 5:3, 4) Unlike people in general, we discern where current events are heading. In exactly what manner will this prophecy about peace and security be fulfilled? We must wait and see how the world scene develops. Therefore, “let us stay awake and keep our senses.” —1 Thess. 5:6; Zeph. 3:8.

The Great Tribulation Begins

5 **Attack on religion.** Recall that Paul wrote: “Whenever it is that they are saying, ‘Peace and security!’ *then* sudden destruction is to be *instantly* on them.” Just as a flash of lightning is closely followed by the crash of thunder, so the time of saying “Peace and security!” will be instantly followed by “sudden destruction.” What will be destroyed? First, “Babylon the Great,” the world empire of false religion, also known as “the prostitute.” (Rev. 17:5, 6, 15) This destruction of Christendom and all other false religious organizations forms the opening phase of the “great tribulation.” (Matt. 24:21; 2 Thess. 2:8) For many, this event will come as a surprise. Why? Because up to that point, the prostitute will think of herself as a “queen” who will “never see mourning.” But she will suddenly discover that her confidence is misplaced. She will be removed quickly, as if “in one day.”—Rev. 18:7, 8.

6 Who or what will carry out the attack against “Babylon the Great”? A “wild beast” with “ten horns.” The book of Revelation indicates that this wild beast refers to the United Nations (UN). The ten horns represent all present political powers that support this “scarlet-colored wild beast.” (Rev. 17:3, 5, 11, 12) How devastating will the attack be? The nations of the UN will plunder the prostitute’s wealth, devour her, and “completely burn her.”—**Read Revelation 17:16.**^[1]

7 **Cutting short the days.** Our King revealed what will occur at this point during the great tribulation. Jesus stated: “On account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.” (**Read Matthew 24:21, 22.**) Jesus’ words were fulfilled on a small scale in 66 C.E. when Jehovah “cut short” the Roman army’s attack on Jerusalem. (Mark 13:20) That action allowed Christians in Jerusalem and Judea to be saved. What will then happen on a global scale during the coming great tribulation? Jehovah, by means of our King,

4. How do we benefit from understanding the significance of Paul’s prophecy about the proclamation of peace and security?

5. What will be the opening phase of the “great tribulation”?

6. Who or what will carry out the attack against “Babylon the Great”?

7. How were Jesus’ words at Matthew 24:21, 22 fulfilled in the first century C.E., and what fulfillment will they have in the future?

FOOTNOTE

[1] It seems reasonable that the destruction of “Babylon the Great” refers mainly to the destruction of the religious institutions, not to a wholesale slaughter of all religious people. Hence, most of Babylon’s former adherents will survive that destruction and, at least openly, will then likely try to distance themselves from religion, as indicated at Zechariah 13:5, 6.

WHAT THE NEAR FUTURE HOLDS

Before the Kingdom comes to put an end to its enemies, several significant events will take place. God's Word reveals what lies ahead of us (See paragraph 2)

BEGINNING OF A PERIOD OF UNKNOWN LENGTH

Precursor of the Great Tribulation



Pronouncement of peace and security
(1 Thess. 5:2, 3)
(See paragraphs 3, 4)

Final sealing of the remnant of anointed Christians
(Rev. 7:1-3)
(See paragraph 15)

The Great Tribulation Begins



Attack on religion
(Rev. 17:16)
(See paragraphs 5, 6)

Attack cut short
(Matt. 24:21, 22)
(See paragraph 7)

Events Leading Up to Armageddon



Celestial phenomena
(Matt. 24:29)
(See paragraph 9)



Judgment of sheep and goats
(Matt. 25:31-33)
(See paragraph 10)



Attack of Gog of Magog
(Ezek. 38:2, 11, 15)
(See paragraphs 12-14)

Jehovah sends his King
to defend all loyal ones
(Ezek. 38:18)
(See paragraphs 13, 16-18)

Finale of the
Great Tribulation

ARMAGEDDON

(Matt. 25:46; Rev. 16:16)

(See paragraphs 16, 17)



Gathering to heaven of the
remaining anointed ones
(Matt. 24:31)
(See paragraph 15)

8, 9. To what phenomena may Jesus have referred, and how will people react to what they observe?

10. What judgment will be pronounced by Jesus, and how will supporters and opposers of God's Kingdom react to it?

will “cut short” the United Nations’ attack on religion so that the true religion will not be destroyed with the false. Thus, while all false religious organizations will be torn down, the one true religion will survive. (Ps. 96:5) Let us now consider what events will occur after this part of the great tribulation has passed.

Events Leading Up to Armageddon

8 Jesus’ prophecy about the last days indicates that several significant developments will take place during the time leading up to Armageddon. The first two events that we will consider are both mentioned in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.—**Read Matthew 24:29-31**; Mark 13:23-27; Luke 21:25-28.

9 Celestial phenomena. Jesus foretells: “The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven.” Certainly the religious leaders will not be looked to for light—they will no longer be identified as such. Was Jesus also referring to a supernatural manifestation in the heavens? Perhaps he was. (Isa. 13:9-11; Joel 2:1, 30, 31) How will people react to what they observe? They will be in “anguish” because of “not knowing the way out.” (Luke 21:25; Zeph. 1:17) Yes, enemies of God’s Kingdom—from ‘kings to slaves’—will grow “faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming” and will run for cover. Yet, they will find no hiding place secure enough for them to escape the wrath of our King.—Luke 21:26; 23:30; Rev. 6:15-17.

10 Pronouncement of judgment. All enemies of God’s Kingdom will then be forced to witness an event that will intensify their agony. Jesus states: “They will see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” (Mark 13:26) This supernatural display of power will signal that Jesus has come to pronounce judgment. In another part of this same prophecy about the last days, Jesus gives more details about the judgment that will be pronounced at this time. We find that information in the parable of the sheep and the goats. (**Read Matthew 25:31-33, 46.**) Loyal supporters of God’s Kingdom will be judged as “sheep” and will “lift up [their] heads,” realizing that their “deliverance is getting near.” (Luke 21:28) However, Kingdom opposers will be judged as “goats” and will “beat themselves in grief,” realizing that “everlasting cutting-off” awaits them.—Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7.

¹¹ After Jesus pronounces his judgment on “all the nations,” several significant events are still to occur before the war of Armageddon begins. (Matt. 25:32) We will consider two of those events: the attack of Gog and the gathering of anointed ones. As we examine those two events, we need to keep in mind that God’s Word does not reveal the exact time sequence in which they will occur. In fact, it seems likely that one will overlap the other to some extent.

¹² **An all-out attack.** Gog of Magog will attack the remaining anointed ones and their other sheep companions. (Read **Ezekiel 38:2, 11.**) This attack against established Kingdom rule will be Satan’s last battle in a war that he has been waging against the anointed remnant since his expulsion from heaven. (Rev. 12:7-9, 17) Especially since the anointed ones began to be gathered into the restored Christian congregation, Satan has tried to destroy their spiritual prosperity—but to no avail. (Matt. 13:30) However, at the time when all false religious organizations are gone and God’s people are seemingly living “unprotected by walls, bars, or gates,” Satan will see a golden opportunity. He will incite his wicked enforcers to move in for an all-out attack on those who are Kingdom supporters.

¹³ Ezekiel describes what will happen. Regarding Gog, the prophecy states: “You will come from your place, from the remotest parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly, a vast army. Like clouds covering the land, you will come against my people.” (Ezek. 38:15, 16) What will be Jehovah’s response to this seemingly unstoppable invasion? “My great rage will flare up,” declares Jehovah. “I will call for a sword.” (Ezek. 38:18, 21; read **Zechariah 2:8.**) Jehovah will intervene in behalf of his servants on earth. That intervention is the war of Armageddon.

¹⁴ Before we move forward in time to consider how Jehovah will defend his people during the war of Armageddon, let us pause for a moment and examine another significant event. This one will occur at some point between the beginning of Satan’s all-out attack and the beginning of Jehovah’s intervention at Armageddon. As noted in paragraph 11, this second event is the gathering of the remaining ones of the anointed remnant.

¹⁵ **Gathering of anointed ones.** Both Matthew and Mark recorded Jesus’ statement about the “chosen ones”—spirit-anointed Christians—as part of a series of events

11. What should we keep in mind as we consider coming events?

12. What will be Satan’s all-out battle against the Kingdom?

13. How will Jehovah intervene in behalf of his people?

14, 15. What other event will occur at some point after the beginning of Satan’s all-out attack?

-
16. What share will the resurrected anointed ones have in the war of Armageddon?
17. What will happen to “the goats” during Armageddon?
18. (a) How will the tables turn for “the sheep”?
(b) How will Jesus complete his victory?

that will occur before the outbreak of Armageddon. (See paragraph 7.) Speaking about himself as King, Jesus prophesies: “Then he will send out the angels and will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from earth’s extremity to heaven’s extremity.” (Mark 13:27; Matt. 24:31) To what act of gathering is Jesus here referring? He is not speaking about the final sealing of the remnant of anointed Christians, which will occur just *before* the great tribulation *begins*. (Rev. 7:1-3) Instead, Jesus refers to an event that will take place *during* the coming great tribulation. Thus, apparently at some point after the start of Satan’s all-out attack on God’s people, anointed ones who still remain on earth will be gathered to heaven.

16 How does this gathering of the anointed remnant relate to the event that will occur next, Armageddon? The timing of the gathering indicates that all anointed ones will be in heaven before God’s war of Armageddon begins. In heaven, the 144,000 corulers with Christ will receive authority to share with Jesus in wielding “an iron rod” of destruction against all enemies of God’s Kingdom. (Rev. 2:26, 27) Then, together with powerful angels, the resurrected anointed ones will follow Christ, the Warrior-King, as he sets out to confront the “vast army” of enemies that is closing in on its prey—Jehovah’s people. (Ezek. 38:15) When that violent confrontation takes place, the war of Armageddon is on!—Rev. 16:16.

The Grand Finale of the Great Tribulation

17 Execution of judgment. The war of Armageddon will be the finale of the great tribulation. At that point, Jesus will take on an added task. Besides being the Judge of “all the nations,” he will also become the Executioner of nations—that is, of all the people whom he had earlier judged as “goats.” (Matt. 25:32, 33) With “a sharp, long sword,” our King will “strike the nations.” Yes, all goatlike ones—from “kings” to “slaves”—“will depart into everlasting cutting-off.”—Rev. 19:15, 18; Matt. 25:46.

18 How the tables will have turned for those whom Jesus judged as “sheep”! Instead of being nearly trampled underfoot by Satan’s vast army of “goats,” “a great crowd” of seemingly defenseless “sheep” will survive the enemy attack and will “come out of the great tribulation.” (Rev. 7:9, 14) Then, after Jesus has conquered and removed all human enemies of God’s Kingdom, he will hurl Satan and his demons into the abyss. There they will be kept in a deathlike,



The war of Armageddon begins!

19, 20. How can we apply the lesson contained in the words found at Isaiah 26:20 and 30:21?

inactive state for a thousand years.—**Read Revelation 6:2; 20:1-3.**

How to Prepare Ourselves

19 How can we prepare ourselves for the earthshaking events that are to come? *The Watchtower* stated some years ago: “Survival will depend on obedience.” Why is that so? The answer is found in a warning from Jehovah to the captive Jews living in ancient Babylon. Jehovah foretold that Babylon would be conquered, but what were God’s people to do to prepare themselves for that event? Jehovah stated: “Go, my people, enter your inner rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for a brief moment until the wrath has passed by.” (Isa. 26:20) Note the verbs in this verse: “go,” “enter,” “shut,” “hide”—all are in the imperative mood; they are commands. The Jews who heeded those commands would have stayed in their houses, away from the conquering soldiers out in the streets. Hence, their survival depended on obeying Jehovah’s instructions.^[2]

20 What is the lesson for us? As in the case of those ancient servants of God, our survival of coming events will depend on our obedience to Jehovah’s instructions. (Isa. 30:21) Such instructions come to us through the congregation arrangement. Therefore, we want to develop heartfelt obedience to the guidance we are receiving. (1 John 5:3) If we do so today, we will be more inclined to obey willingly in the future and thus receive the protection of our Father, Jehovah, and our King, Jesus. (Zeph. 2:3) That divine protection will allow us to witness firsthand how God’s Kingdom will completely remove its enemies. What an unforgettable event that will be!

FOOTNOTE

[2] For more information, see *Isaiah’s Prophecy—Light for All Mankind* I, pages 282-283.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What Kingdom accomplishments considered in this publication have especially strengthened your faith?
- What are some of the events that lie ahead of us?
- How will our King protect us before and during Armageddon?
- How can we prepare ourselves for the events that are to come?

The Kingdom Carries Out God's Will on Earth

22

A FAITHFUL brother arrives at the meeting, tired after a stressful day. He has faced mistreatment from a demanding boss, stress over the challenges of caring for his family, and anxiety over an illness afflicting his wife. As the music for the opening song begins, he breathes a sigh of relief, glad to be at the Kingdom Hall with his brothers and sisters. The song is about the hope of life in Paradise, and the lyrics ask him to picture that hope, to see himself in that setting. He has always loved this song, and as he sings it along with his family, hope stirs within his troubled heart.

² Have you ever felt that way? Most of us have. Admittedly, though, life in this old system can make it very difficult for us to see the coming Paradise as a reality. These are “critical times hard to deal with,” and the world we live in is anything but paradisaic. (2 Tim. 3:1) What can help us to see our hope as real? Well, how do we really know that soon God's Kingdom will rule all mankind? Let us consider a few of the prophecies from Jehovah that his people saw fulfilled in the ancient past. Then we will review how those and similar prophecies are undergoing a thrilling fulfillment right now. Finally, with our faith thus bolstered, we will focus on what such prophecies mean for our future.

How Jehovah Fulfilled His Promises in the Distant Past

³ Imagine what life was like for the Jews living in exile in Babylon back in the sixth century B.C.E. Many grew up in exile, as did their parents, and life was hard. The Babylonians ridiculed them for their faith in Jehovah. (Ps. 137:1-3) Through the decades, loyal Jews kept clinging to this one bright hope: Jehovah promised to gather his people back to their homeland. Jehovah said that conditions would be wonderful there. He even compared the restored land of Judah to the garden of Eden—a paradise! (**Read Isaiah 51:3.**)

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

The Kingdom fulfills all of God's promises regarding mankind and the earth

1, 2. (a) Why may it be difficult at times to see the Paradise as real? (b) What can help us to strengthen our faith in God's promises?

3. What promise comforted the Jews living in exile in Babylon?

4. How did Jehovah assure the Jews regarding security in their homeland?

5. What prophecies helped the returning exiles to be confident that Jehovah would provide abundantly for their needs?

6. God's people had long suffered from what kind of health problems, and of what did Jehovah assure the returning exiles?

Such promises were clearly designed to reassure God's people, addressing doubts that might trouble their hearts. How so? Consider some specific prophecies.

4 Security. Those exiles would return, not to a literal paradise, but to a distant land that had lain desolate for 70 years, a land that few of them had ever seen. Lions were common in Bible lands back then, as were wolves, leopards, and other predators. A family man might wonder, 'How will I keep my wife and children safe? What about the sheep and cattle—how will I protect them?' Such concerns would be only natural. Think, then, of God's promise recorded at **Isaiah 11:6-9** and of how comforting it must have been. **(Read.)** With those lovely poetic words, Jehovah assured the exiles that they and their livestock would be safe. The lion would eat straw in the sense that it would not devour the Jews' cattle. Faithful ones would have nothing to fear from such predators. Jehovah promised that his people would be safe in the restored land of Judah, even in the wilderness and in the forests.—Ezek. 34:25.

5 Abundance. Other concerns might arise. 'Will I be able to feed my family in the restored homeland? Where will we live? Will there be any work, and will it be better than the drudgery of living in exile under the thumb of our conquerors?' Through inspired prophecies, Jehovah considerably addressed those questions too. Jehovah promised that his obedient people would find the rains reliable; as a result, the ground would produce "abundant and rich" bread. (Isa. 30:23) As to shelter and meaningful work, Jehovah promised concerning his people: "They will build houses and live in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build for someone else to inhabit, nor will they plant for others to eat." (Isa. 65:21, 22) Yes, in many ways life would be wonderful compared with their exile in pagan Babylon. But what about their most serious problems—the ones that led to their exile in the first place?

6 Spiritual health. Long before their exile, God's people had grown spiritually sick. Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah said of his people: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is diseased." (Isa. 1:5) Spiritually, they were blind and deaf, for they kept stopping up their ears to Jehovah's counsel and closing their eyes to the enlightenment he offered. (Isa. 6:10; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2) If the same problems were to plague the returning exiles, what security could they have? Would they not simply lose Jehovah's favor again? How reassuring was Jehovah's promise: "In

that day the deaf will hear the words of the book, and out of the gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.” (Isa. 29:18) Yes, Jehovah would bring spiritual healing to his chastened, repentant people. As long as they remained responsive and obedient, he would provide life-giving direction and enlightenment.

7 Did Jehovah live up to his promises? The answer is a matter of historical record. The Jews who returned to their homeland were blessed with security, abundance, and spiritual health. For example, Jehovah protected them from neighboring peoples who were stronger and more numerous than they. Predators did not wipe out the Jews’ livestock. True, those Jews saw only a limited fulfillment of the paradisaic prophecies that men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel wrote down—but the fulfillment that God’s people saw was thrilling and just what they needed at the time. As we reflect on what Jehovah did for his people back then, our faith will grow stronger. If the initial, limited fulfillment of those prophecies was exciting, what would the greater fulfillment be like? Consider what Jehovah has done for us today.

How Jehovah Has Started to Fulfill His Promises in Our Own Time

8 Jehovah’s people do not now form a literal nation, nor do they occupy a single, physical land. Rather, anointed Christians make up a spiritual nation, “the Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16) Their companions of the “other sheep” join them in a spiritual “land,” a realm of activity in which they worship Jehovah God unitedly. That worship is their way of life. (John 10:16; Isa. 66:8) And what kind of a “land” has Jehovah given us? It is a spiritual paradise. Here God’s promises about Edenic conditions have seen a wonderful spiritual fulfillment. Consider some examples.

9 **Security.** In the prophecy recorded at Isaiah 11:6-9, we find a delightful picture of harmony and peace—between wild animals on the one hand and humans with their domestic animals on the other. Does that picture find a spiritual fulfillment today? Yes! In verse 9, we learn why it is that such creatures will cause neither harm nor ruin: “Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.” Does “knowledge of Jehovah” change the behavior of animals? No, it is people who are transformed by coming to know the Most High God and learning to imitate his peaceful ways. That

7. How were God’s promises to his exiled people fulfilled, and why should we find that fulfillment faith-strengthening?

8. God’s people today enjoy what sort of “land”?

9, 10. (a) How is the prophecy of Isaiah 11:6-9 being fulfilled today?

(b) What evidence of peace do we find among God’s people?



Our congregations help us to be spiritually well-fed, secure, and healthy

11, 12. What kind of famine afflicts today's world, yet how has Jehovah provided abundantly for his people?

is why in our spiritual paradise today, we can observe a heartwarming fulfillment of that prophecy. Under Kingdom rule, Christ's followers are learning to put off their fierce, animalistic qualities and live in peace and harmony with their spiritual brothers and sisters.

¹⁰ For example, in this publication we have discussed the matter of Christian neutrality—both the Scriptural basis for our understanding and the resulting persecution that God's people have faced for taking a neutral stand. Is it not remarkable that in this violent world, there is a sizable “nation” of people who refuse, even under threat of death, to take part in violence of any kind? What remarkable proof this is that the subjects of the Messianic King are indeed enjoying peace like that described by Isaiah! Jesus proclaimed that his followers would be known by the love they had among themselves. (John 13:34, 35) Within the congregation, Christ is patiently using his “faithful and discreet slave” to teach all true Christians to be peaceable, loving, and gentle.—Matt. 24:45-47.

¹¹ **Abundance.** The world suffers from spiritual famine. The Bible warned: “‘Look! The days are coming,’ declares

the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, 'when I will send a famine into the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah.'" (Amos 8:11) Do the citizens of God's Kingdom suffer famine too? Jehovah foretold the following contrast between his people and his enemies: "My servants will eat, but you will go hungry. Look! My servants will drink, but you will go thirsty. Look! My servants will rejoice, but you will suffer shame." (Isa. 65:13) Have you observed the fulfillment of those words?

¹² Spiritual provisions flow to us like an ever-broadening and ever-deepening river. Our Bible-based publications—as well as recordings and videos, our meetings and conventions, and the material published on our Web site—together amount to an ongoing flood tide of spiritual sustenance in this spiritually starving world. (Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel 3:18) Are you not thrilled to see the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises of abundance in your daily life? Do you make sure that you feed regularly at Jehovah's table?

¹³ **Spiritual health.** Spiritual blindness and deafness are pandemic today. (2 Cor. 4:4) Yet, Christ is curing infirmities and illnesses worldwide. Have you seen blind eyes opened and deaf ears unstopped? If you have seen people come to an accurate knowledge of the truth of God's Word, letting go of the religious lies that once made them blind and deaf to the truth, you have seen this promise fulfilled: "In that day the deaf will hear the words of the book, and out of the gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see." (Isa. 29:18) Around the world, hundreds of thousands of people every year are finding such spiritual cures. Each person who leaves Babylon the Great behind and joins us to worship in our spiritual paradise is living proof that Jehovah's promises have come true!

¹⁴ Each chapter of this book contains powerful evidence that Christ has brought his followers into a genuine spiritual paradise in this time of the end. Let us keep meditating on the many ways in which we are being blessed in that paradise today. As we do, our faith in Jehovah's promises for the future will continue to grow stronger.

"Let Your Kingdom Come"

¹⁵ Jehovah's purpose has long been to make the earth a global paradise. He placed Adam and Eve in a paradise garden, and he gave them the command to fill the earth with their offspring and to take care of all of its creatures. (Gen. 1:28) Instead, Adam and Eve followed Satan into rebellion

13. How have you seen fulfillment of Jehovah's promise about blind eyes being opened and deaf ears unstopped?

14. Meditating on what evidence will strengthen our faith?

15. Why may we be sure that the earth will become a paradise?

16. How does the Bible describe the security we will enjoy in Paradise?

17. Why may we be sure that Jehovah will provide abundantly for our needs when the Kingdom is ruling over the whole earth?

18, 19. (a) What does the prophecy recorded at Isaiah 65:20-22 mean to you? (b) In what sense will our days be “like the days of a tree”?

and plunged all their offspring into imperfection, sin, and death. Yet, God’s purpose never changed. Once spoken, his words always find complete fulfillment. (**Read Isaiah 55: 10, 11.**) We may be sure, then, that the descendants of Adam and Eve will fill this earth and subdue it, taking loving care of Jehovah’s creation in a global paradise. At that time, the prophecies originally given to the Jewish exiles about life in paradisaic conditions will reach their ultimate fulfillment! Consider the following examples.

16 Security. At long last, the heartwarming word picture painted at Isaiah 11:6-9 will see a complete fulfillment even in a literal sense. Men, women, and children will be safe and secure wherever they go on earth. No creature, whether human or animal, will pose any threat. Imagine a time when you will see this entire planet as your home, where you can swim in the rivers, lakes, and seas; traverse the mountain ranges; and roam the grasslands in complete safety. And when night falls, you will not worry. The words of Ezekiel 34:25 will come true, so that it will even be possible for God’s people to “dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forests.”

17 Abundance. Picture a time when there will be no such thing as poverty, malnutrition, famine, or welfare systems. The spiritual plenty that God’s people enjoy today is a guarantee that the Messianic King will feed his subjects in every respect. When Jesus was on the earth, he demonstrated on a small scale that he can fulfill such promises, for he fed thousands of hungry people with just a few loaves and fish. (Matt. 14:17, 18; 15:34-36; Mark 8:19, 20) When God’s Kingdom is ruling over the whole earth, prophecies like this one will see a literal fulfillment: “He will give the rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the bread that the ground produces will be abundant and rich. In that day your livestock will graze in spacious pastures.”—Isa. 30:23.

18 Today many people can hardly imagine owning a comfortable home or having rewarding, satisfying work to do. In this corrupt system, many feel that they work long and hard with little real benefit to themselves or their family, while the rich and greedy reap all the rewards. Imagine what it will be like when this prophecy comes true worldwide: “They will build houses and live in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build for someone else to inhabit, nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a

tree, and the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full.”—Isa. 65:20-22.

19 What does it mean that our days will be “like the days of a tree”? When you stand at the base of a massive tree, do you feel a sense of awe sweeping over you as you contemplate how long that living thing has been there—perhaps since long before your great-grandparents were born? It might occur to you that if you were to remain in your present imperfect state, such a tree would likely outlive you, still stretching out its long, peaceful existence even after you had become a mere memory. How kind of Jehovah to assure us that in the Paradise to come, our own days will be long and peaceful! (Ps. 37:11, 29) The day will come when even long-lived trees will seem to us as transient as the grass, coming and going while we continue living forever!

20 Perfect health. Today, sickness and death cast their grim shadows over every aspect of this world. In a sense, we are *all* sick—infected with a terminal illness called sin. The only cure is Christ’s ransom sacrifice. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23) During the Millennial Reign, Jesus and his corulers will fully apply the benefits of that sacrifice, gradually eradicating all traces of sin from faithful humans. Isaiah’s prophecy will come true in the fullest sense: “No resident will say: ‘I am sick.’ The people dwelling in the land will be pardoned for their error.” (Isa. 33:24) Imagine a time when no one will be blind, deaf, or crippled. **(Read Isaiah 35:5, 6.)** No illness will prove to be beyond Jesus’ ability to heal—whether physical, mental, or emotional. Loyal Kingdom subjects will enjoy perfect health!

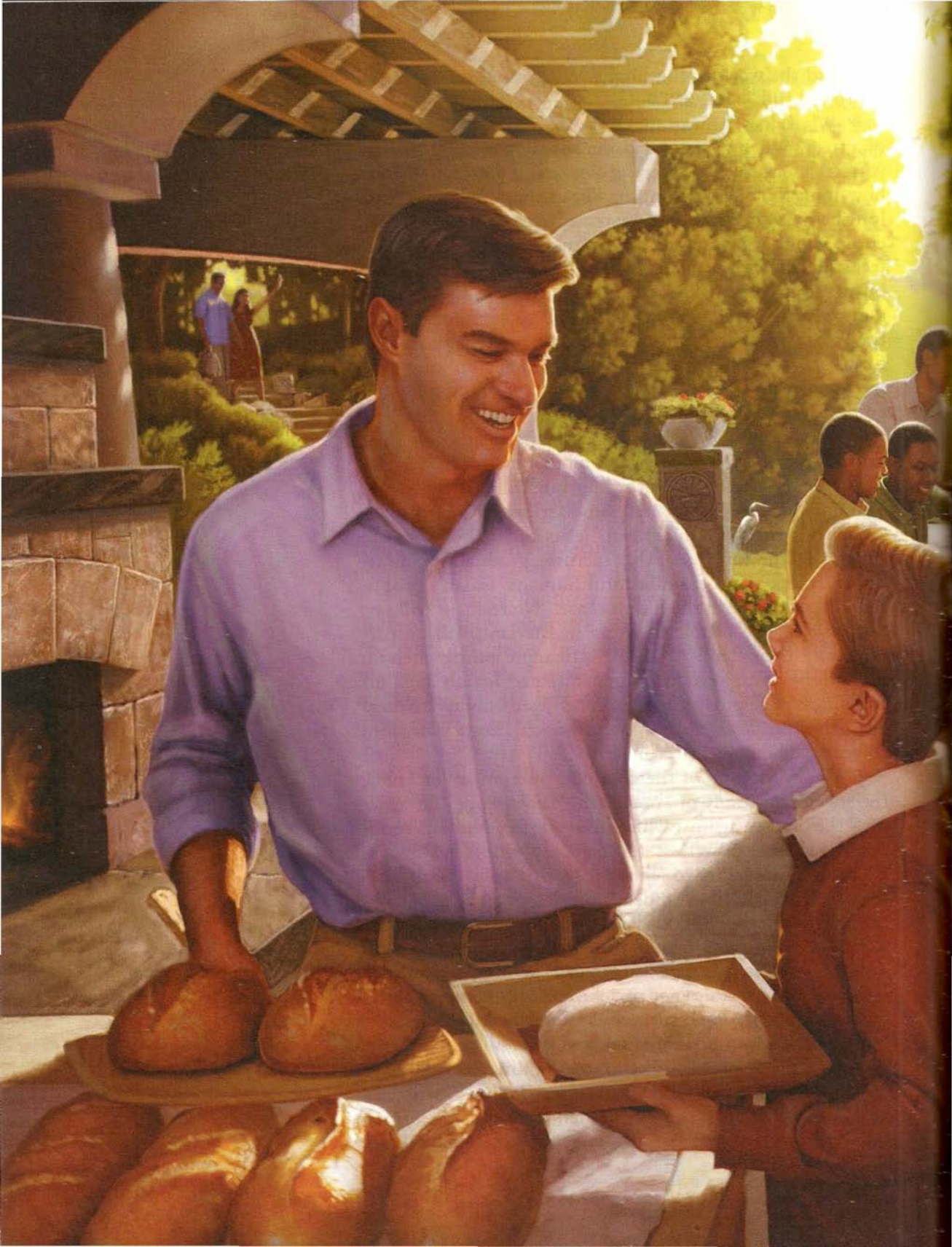
21 What, though, of the common outcome of sickness, the inevitable result of sin—death? That is our “last enemy,” the one foe against which all imperfect humans sooner or later prove powerless. (1 Cor. 15:26) But is death such a daunting adversary to Jehovah? Notice what Isaiah foretold: “He will swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces.” (Isa. 25:8) Can you picture that time? No more funerals, no more cemeteries, no more tears of grief! Quite the contrary—there will be tears of joy as Jehovah fulfills his thrilling promise to bring back the dead! **(Read Isaiah 26:19.)** At last, countless wounds inflicted by death will heal.

22 By the end of the Millennium, the Kingdom will have finished carrying out God’s will on earth, and Christ will hand the rulership over to his Father. (1 Cor. 15:25-28) Humankind, perfected at last, will be ready to face a final test

20. How will loyal Kingdom subjects come to enjoy perfect health?

21. What will become of death, and why do you find that promise comforting?

22. How will the Messianic Kingdom finish carrying out God’s will on earth?





The Kingdom will fulfill all of
Jehovah's promises regarding
mankind and the earth

23, 24. (a) Why is the fulfillment of God's promises a certainty? (b) What are you determined to do?

when Satan is released from his abyss of inactivity. Thereafter, Christ will finally crush that vile serpent and all his supporters. (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 20:3, 7-10) But all who loyally love Jehovah will face a bright prospect. Perhaps no words could paint a better picture than the ones we find in an inspired phrase. It is the promise that faithful ones will have "the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Rom. 8:21.

²³ Those promises are not based on mere hopes, wishes, or dreams. Fulfillment of Jehovah's promises is a certainty! Why? Remember the words of Jesus that we discussed in the opening chapter of this book. He taught his followers to pray to Jehovah: "Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10) God's Kingdom is not the product of someone's imagination. It is a reality! It rules in heaven right now. For a century now, it has fulfilled Jehovah's promises in ways that we can clearly see in the Christian congregation. We may be sure, then, that all of Jehovah's promises will be fulfilled when God's Kingdom comes to exert its full power toward the earth!

²⁴ We know that God's Kingdom will come. We know that Jehovah's every word of promise will come true. Why? Because GOD'S KINGDOM RULES! The question for each of us to ask is, 'Does the Kingdom rule *me*?' Let us do all we can to live as loyal subjects of that Kingdom now, so that we may benefit from its perfect, just rule forever!

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How did Jehovah fulfill his promises regarding the Jews returning from exile?
- How has Jehovah allowed us to enjoy a spiritual paradise today?
- What aspects of life in Paradise appeal to you the most?
- What convinces you that God's Kingdom is real and is now ruling?

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